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ABSTRACT

Educational brokerages are described in this monograph as intermediaries which help adult students find their way into and through the experience of postsecondary education. Examples given range from community-based, free-standing counseling and advocacy agencies to community colleges without faculty or campus. Each of the nine chapters asks and discusses a broad question related to setting up, maintaining, and evaluating an educational brokerage for adult learners. The questions are: What is educational brokering? How do we select our services? Whom do we serve? How do we staff our operations? How do we organize our operations? How do we relate to other institutions? How do we reach our clients? How do we make it financially? and How do we appraise our efforts? Two sections which appear in each chapter are "The Problems We Face" and "Our Reflections and Strategies." A list of participants in Project Exchange (a cooperative effort funded by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (DHEW) during which a number of educational brokerages shared the information which resulted in this monograph) is included in the introduction. An appendix suggests uses of the monograph and contains a directory of 18 brokering programs. (LMS)

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EDUCATIONAL BROKERING A NEW SERVICE FOR ADULT LEARNERS

James M. Heffernan
Francis U. Macy
Donn F. Vickers

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
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Ivan Powell

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INTRODUCTION

It is the intent of this monograph to share the experiences of a number of people who have been involved in establishing and running educational brokering programs. It is written mainly for those who have an interest in meeting the special needs of adult learners. Those considering new outreach programs for adults should find it particularly useful.

The educational brokering movement is still young enough and small enough for all the practitioners to know each other. We wish to capitalize on our sense of community, before we grow too large, to communicate our purposes and prospects. We hope to encourage others to create new services for adult learners and to alert them to opportunities and problems they can expect to encounter.

Educational brokerages are best described as go-betweens or intermediaries which serve to help adult students find their way into and through the experience of postsecondary education. There are many kinds of brokering agencies and services, from community-based, free-standing counseling and advocacy agencies to community colleges without faculty or campus. A wide variety of new methods and roles currently are being tested under the name of brokering; common to all is the intermediary function.

At the one hand of the broker are several million Americans whose education has been interrupted by the responsibilities of early parenthood, economic pressures, social and cultural deprivation, frustration and low achievement in the classrooms of their youth, or by other impediments. At the broker's other hand is a vast and complex array of educational programs: private and public colleges and universities, community colleges, proprietary schools, correspondence schools, public schools' adult programs, employer sponsored training programs, labor union and church sponsored institutions and programs, and local, state and federal agencies involved in education.

The need for brokering derives from one of the most highly valued aspects of American education: namely, its extreme diversity and decentralized control. Our society offers a dazzling range of places for getting an education, each pretty much sufficient unto itself. Small wonder that what Harold Howe called our "non-system" of education appears formidable to many citizens.

The broker links these adult learners to the wide array of educational resources. The brokering agencies that have come into being in recent years have not seen themselves as enemies of the established order in education, or as major expediters of change in educational

institutions that have been patiently constructed over many decades. Instead, they have tried to facilitate good matches between people and institutions. They have focused mainly on services to individuals and groups seeking to gain greater control over their lives through continuing education. They help people to make life decisions, to select appropriate educational resources and to embark on learning programs.

The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education in HEW has funded several educational brokering agencies. In 1974-75, the Fund enabled project directors to share, systematically, much information on their operations through a program for communication called Project Exchange. A questionnaire in October, a conference in November at Airlie House, and three meetings of brokerage program staffs — at Community College of Vermont in April, at WINNERS in Boston in May, and at Hudson Community College Commission in May — have kept the league of brokers together and talking. The chapters to follow are comprised of the substance of those meetings and exchanges in which we tried to identify what was common to all of us in our separate enterprises. This monograph is, then, essentially a "group effort." Included are the observations and thoughtful introspection of many people — nearly all, in fact, of those who have been involved in the educational brokerage movement in 1974-75.

These group exchanges have yielded a *joint* product. People listed as participants all have made significant contributions. This has made it difficult not to use the term "we" in the pages to follow. Not the imperial nor the editorial "we," and, most hopefully, not the prescriptive, pedantic "we." We wish to convey our strong sense of common mission and shared rewards, and also to generalize on responses we have made to problems, both conceptual and concrete.

Educational brokerages share many of the same problems, yet we also represent many different settings, clientele and staff. The new brokerage ventures to come in the future will face similarly unique problems and settings. Therefore, this piece will not presume to be a "walk-through" of building a brokerage program, nor an organizational development text. It will not follow a tidy litany of Questions and Answers, like the typical "how-to" manual. It is too soon in the life of the movement to know which strategies work best.

We shall attempt, instead, to deal with *critical* problems and processes, those which we believe to be *generic* in establishing and running educational brokering programs. These are the issues and the

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obstacles we all have faced; these are the strategies we have employed to handle them. It is our deep conviction that people who undertake brokering for adult learners should work out solutions appropriate to their own settings. Rather than focus on answers, then, we think it will be more valuable to present clusters of what have turned out to be important problems. That will be followed by some of our general reflections on these problems, as well as some of the strategies we have developed in dealing with them.

Selecting the major problems faced by new organizations is a little like picking up jack-straws; it's difficult to move one stick without twitching some or all of the rest. Given the interrelatedness of most of the issues in a new venture like an educational brokerage, it's difficult to talk about staff without twitching the subject of services or budget; it's difficult to talk about clients without twitching the subject of mission, or external linkages.

But there are certain clusters of problems which in our experience hang together. These will form the structure of this document, as follows: Mission and Purpose, Services, Clientele, Staff, Organization, External Relationships, Client Outreach, Finances, and Self-Appraisal.

Full expressions of thanks and acknowledgements to all who have brought this document to reality would be impossible. The Project Exchange participants listed in the next pages have contributed a wealth of substance and insight. So, too, have the many others who made amendments to the early drafts. The support of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education has been indispensable from the start. Virginia Smith, Russell Edgerton, Carol Stoel and other Fund staff should feel rightfully proud of their early nurturing of the very idea of brokering itself, and the projects they have supported with funds and counsel. A similar foresight is also seen in their desire to disseminate via Project Exchange and this monograph some of the rich experience gained in brokering thus far.

Finally, each of the three authors of this monograph would like to point out that any flaws or shortcomings in it probably are the fault of the other two. Each of us will be happy to accept full and sole credit for any special insights that this document may contain.

J.M.H.
F.U.M.
D.F.V.
Syracuse, NY January, 1976

INTRODUCTION

PARTICIPANTS IN PROJECT EXCHANGE

Alabama Consortium for Development in Higher Education
Demopolis, Alabama
Paul Spell

Capital Higher Education Service (CHES)
Hartford, Connecticut
Donald E. Barnes
Maye Grant
Fred O. Pinkham
Patrick Proctor

Community College of Vermont (CCV)
Montpelier, Vermont
Lawrence Daloz
Anne Lynn
Kenneth Hood
Clo Pitkin
Peter Smith
Mary Wade

Hudson Community College Commission (HCCC)
Jersey City, New Jersey
Daniel S. Kilfoyle
Joseph P. O'Neill
Dennis McMullen

Okanogan County Educational Service
Wenatchee Valley College, Omak, Washington
Delmar G. Corrick

Pennsylvania Adult Counseling Program
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Michael Kelly

Regional Continuing Education for Women Program (RCEWP)
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Barbara Bloom

INTRODUCTION

Regional Learning Service of Central New York (RLS)
Syracuse, New York
Jean Kordalewski
Linda Lehman-Hill
Francis U. Macy
Mary Lou Marien
Donn F. Vickers

Syracuse University, Department of Higher/ Postsecondary Education
Syracuse, New York
James M. Heffernan

Women's Inner-City Educational Resources Service (WINNERS)
Boston, Massachusetts
Suzanne Lipsky
Mary Goode
Marguerite Goodwin

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT IS EDUCATIONAL BROKERING?

A. Who Needs It?

The post-college age student is becoming the major consumer of educational services. Most of the "New Learners" are adult, part-time students returning to education after varying lengths of time away from formal study. Studies done for the Commission on Non-Traditional Study indicate that in 1971-72 there were 32.1 million individual adult education participants. Many new characteristics and problems are represented by these new educational consumers.

There are many more potential learners who are not presently involved in educational programs. The Commission on Non-Traditional Study reports that in the minds of a very large number of American adults, education is still too rigid in its formal requirements, is still too costly, and is typically unavailable at the times and places most needed. In commenting on the study, K. Patricia Cross concludes:

"There is a potential clientele out there eager to participate in learning activities if we can lower the barriers and provide the programs to meet their needs."

The nature of those barriers and needs is clear. Studies by the Commission of Non-Traditional Study, the Educational Testing Service, the University of California at Berkeley, Syracuse University and others indicate that while cost and lack of time are the two greatest barriers to adult study, other important barriers are students' lack of confidence and lack of information on study opportunities, and institutions' lack of understanding of individual needs. The educational problems of adult students are interrelated with vocational and emotional problems, particularly for those who have experienced prior failure in formal education. The ETS study of 1972 found that approximately 26 million adults did not participate in formal study for reasons which could have been remedied by adequate counseling.

In recent years responses to specific adult needs have taken many forms, under the rubric of "non-traditional education." Such programs as the external degree, University Without Walls, weekend colleges, Empire State College and independent study programs illustrate the changes in learning settings and delivery systems that have occurred in non-traditional postsecondary education. Traditional institutions also are loosening up their time and space arrangements in order to serve adult learner needs more effectively.

This monograph will discuss still another response to the multi-level problems of adult learners, the educational brokering agency. Such units serve as middlemen between adult learners and educational institutions and resources. They offer counseling, instructional, referral and advocacy services in varying combinations. Whatever their specific services are, their common purpose is to provide support and guidance for adult learners. They are not bound by the conventions of the "four walls and four years" model of higher education.

Brokering agencies obviously cannot solve all of the human problems that attend the return to education. They do have, however, the freedom and flexibility to respond quickly and individualistically to many of the needs of adult learners that traditional educational institutions are ill-equipped to meet.

B. What Is It?

The notion of brokering is an old one, particularly in cultures with arranged marriages or barter economies. Educational brokering is a new version of that notion. It means serving adult clients' interests as a broker for various educational opportunities. It represents a new configuration of educational services, and a new focus on the individual as a prospective learner with unique needs.

It also is designed to meet the needs of those who have not been the central concern of our postsecondary institutions, the post-college age or adult students. To be sure, schools and colleges, employment and social service agencies have been providing counseling to adults for years, but not as their primary function. Furthermore, they are geared mainly to providing adults with information and guidance on the use of their own programs. One distinctive quality of brokering agencies is that they aim to present adults with the complete range of educational and career alternatives and help them to choose those most appropriate to their individual needs. Brokering agencies are neutral towards the choices made; conventional educational institutions usually aim to increase their own clientele or student bodies.

"Most educational institutions try to slot people into their programs even if they are not what people need. Brokerages can avoid this institutional bias by standing among many institutions,

with the sole interest of the learner in mind."

— Joseph O'Neill, Hudson Community College Commission

Although the specific kinds of services may differ, educational brokerages start from the premise that the needs and the interests of learners take precedence over those of institutions, agencies and staff. The missions we all share are to enable individuals to 1) define goals for their personal and working lives; 2) set objectives for further education and training; 3) select learning experiences to attain competencies and certification; and 4) gain access to the appropriate learning opportunities.

A number of functions are required of an educational broker to facilitate these four client objectives:

- **Define goals for personal and working lives.**

The broker's function is to facilitate personal assessment, value clarification, occupational exploration, and long-term planning by the client. This requires the broker to have capabilities for counseling and for evaluating career alternatives.

- **Set objectives for further education.**

The broker's function is to facilitate a choice by the client of the competencies and/or the certification (diploma, degree, license) to be obtained. To do this, the broker utilizes assessment techniques and information on additional skills and credentials needed to achieve clients' personal goals. Also investigated is whether formal learning experiences or other kinds of learning experiences are most appropriate.

- **Select learning experiences to achieve competencies and certification.**

The broker's function is to facilitate a selection by the client of specific learning activities. The broker needs information on all programs in local secondary and higher educational institutions, proprietary occupational institutions, manpower agencies, social and cultural agencies, business and industry training centers, and, often, learning resources represented by people in the community itself.

- **Gain access to appropriate learning opportunities.**

The broker's function is to facilitate the client's working through the procedures for admission and financial aid, and securing equitable recognition for prior learning. This requires that the broker be acquainted with key institutional personnel and procedures, be able to help clients present evidence of prior learning, and serve as advocate for them with individual institutions.

The foregoing functions are performed through a combination of activities: information-giving, referral, assessment, counseling, outreach and client advocacy. Although various brokering agencies give different emphases to these activities, and each client may require a

different combination of them, they comprise what we consider to be the core brokering activities.

Not all are new and unique. Established institutions have been doing counseling, assessment and referral for years as part of their regular procedures. What is distinct about brokering is the packaging and delivery systems for these services — the ways clients are reached and served directly in the community—and, perhaps most important, the new educational role of client advocate. Client advocacy means placing learners' needs and interests above those of institutions. This advocacy for client interests takes two forms: intercession on behalf of individual students, and efforts to change institutional policies which hamper adult learners' re-entry and progress; e.g., scheduling, offerings, costs.

We have arrayed in Figure One a number of agencies which are engaged in brokering and related activities, in order to further describe the brokering enterprise. On the lateral dimension are the kinds of services offered; on the vertical are the kinds of organizational structures and formats.

The center column lists a number of agencies engaged in brokering services. On either side are listed agencies which are doing related work, the spiritual cousins of brokering. We do not include them in our definition of brokering *per se*, however, because not all of the core activities of brokering are pursued. (This is not to imply any exclusivity, but merely to build toward a more clear definition of what brokering entails.)

For example, at the left side are listed several agencies which collect and disseminate information on educational resources and career preparation, either by means of a telephone service (the Life-Long Learning Center in New York City) or by computer terminal (the Oregon Career Information Service), or by publications (the METRODOC Directory in Toronto). Since no counseling, assessment or advocacy are included with these information services, however, we do not consider them "full-service" brokering agencies.

On the right side are listed several individualized degree programs. These are institutions in which students design their own academic programs, most commonly through learning-contact arrangements. Requirements are completed through off-campus study experiences which are set up and supervised by college faculty. For example, faculty mentors in the Empire State College units and the twenty-five units of the University Without Walls help students draw up contracts, refer them to various community learning resources, and serve as judges of the work done to meet contract requirements. Since faculty act as evaluators of academic work and as authorities for dispensing

credit and degrees, we do not include these programs in our definition of brokering. Brokers perform only a go-between or intermediary function; they are neither judges nor certifiers. But faculty mentors still must evaluate performance in the light of institutional standards, however student-oriented they may be. Hence, these faculty could not as freely be advocates for individual student interests above the regulations and standards of their "home" institutions.

This is a fine-line distinction, perhaps, yet it points up a generic element of brokering that we believe to be an important part of its definition. As brokers, we try to separate the roles of counseling and

FIGURE ONE
BROKERING AND RELATED AGENCIES

	INFORMATION SERVICES	BROKERING SERVICES	INDIVIDUALIZED DEGREE PROGRAMS
Independent Agency	Continuing Education Directory, METRODOC, Toronto Library System, Toronto, Ontario	Career Counseling Service, Providence, Rhode Island Regional Learning Service (RLS) Syracuse, New York Women's Inner-City Educational Resource Service (WINNERS), Boston, Massachusetts	Goddard College Adult Program Plainfield, Vermont
Unit of State System	HELP Service, University of Wisconsin System, Madison, Wisconsin Oregon Career Information Service, Eugene, Oregon	Community College of Vermont (CCV) Montpelier, Vermont Hudson Community College Commission (HCCC), Hoboken, New Jersey Pennsylvania Adult Counseling Program Department of Education, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania	Empire State College, Saratoga Springs, New York Metropolitan State University Minneapolis, Minnesota
Consortium of Institutions	New York City Regional Center for Life-Long Learning of the Regents Regional Coordinating Council, New York, New York	Regional Continuing Education for Women Program (RCEWP), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Alabama Consortium for Development of Higher Education, Demopolis, Alabama	University Without Walls Union for Experimenting Colleges and Universities, Yellow Springs, Ohio
Unit of Independent Institution		Okanogan County Educational Service of Wenatchee Valley College (OCES) Omak, Washington School for New Learning, DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois	Johnston College, Redlands University Independent Study Program Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York

certification. Brokers do not evaluate for credentialization. To do so would preclude the complete fulfillment of the client advocate role. That is, we strive to give learners a non-judgmental agent with whom they can frankly share all problems, and whom they can trust to act completely in their interest without feeling pressed to maintain the standards of other institutions. Adult learners typically are reluctant to re-enter the world of education; they frequently are wary of "gate-keepers"; they greatly need champions. Brokers seek to facilitate adults' return to education by being their advocates but not their judges.

This is not to imply that an institution which offers instruction still might not be considered a brokering agency. The Community College of Vermont, the Hudson Community College Commission and the DePaul University School of New Learning have a great deal of interaction with prospective students through their referrals and counseling; they also hire staff from the community to teach courses toward degrees. Brokering services are even provided in a program which awards degrees but offers no instruction. Thomas A. Edison College has a network of counselors throughout New Jersey who counsel and refer their prospective Edison degree candidates to learning and certifying opportunities. However, in all of these programs, those doing the referral, counseling or individual advocacy are not the same people who do the teaching, grading and credit/degree awarding. Again, the roles of counselor and advocate are not mixed with those of judge and certifier.

The vertical dimension in Figure One describes the organizational settings which brokering agencies have developed. We have created a number of interesting structural arrangements to ensure the independence and flexibility essential to the advocacy role in brokering. The organizational structures which have emerged thus far range from completely free-standing agencies to special service units within degree-granting institutions.

1. Free-standing agencies. These are attached to no single institution and are supported by combinations of client fees, state and federal funds, and business/industry contracts. Internal governance is essentially independent of outside agencies. Examples are the Regional Learning Service of Central New York (RLS) in Syracuse, the Greater Cleveland External Degree Service, the Regional Educational Opportunity Center (REOC) program in Massachusetts and the Women's Inner-City Resource Service (WINNERS), a program for low-income women in Boston. One of the earliest of the free-standing agencies, the Capital Higher Education Service (CHES) in Hartford, recently has been dissolved as an organization, but many of its functions and services have been transferred to other local institutions. The largest of the free-

standing agencies, the NIE sponsored Career Education Project in Providence completes its developmental phases in mid-1976, to move toward other multiple sources of funding support.

2. New institutions in existing systems: These are newly-created programs within a larger state college system. Support comes mainly from state funding, and governance structures are linked to the broader state system. Brokering activities in this category of organizational settings may also include instruction, such as in the Community College of Vermont (CCV) in Montpelier, or the Hudson Community College Commission (HCCC) in Jersey City. The bulk of instruction, however, typically is not done by institutional staff, but is brokered among community resources. Or, a unit within a state system may do no direct instruction at all, but instead award degrees for examination-credit or for work done elsewhere. The Regents External Degree Program (REDP) of New York State supports such a program through its Voluntary Advisory Network. Volunteer tutors around the state serve as counselors and instructional brokers to students preparing for Regents External Degrees and examinations or other external degrees. The John Wood Community College (JWCC) in Illinois is comprised of a central headquarters and a number of "common market" institutions at which students may attend classes. Degrees are awarded by JWCC and are recognized as part of the Illinois state community college system.

3. Consortium of institutions: These are arrangements whereby a central headquarters staff coordinates a network of counselors/advocates located in individual colleges to advise clients of learning opportunities throughout the network. The Regional Continuing Education for Women Program (RCEWP) in Philadelphia has staff members at five area colleges linked together by a coordinator and central program office located at Temple University. The Illinois Graduate Study Center at Millikin University serves an advisement and brokering function at the post-B.A. level. Millikin offers no graduate courses itself, but seeks to match potential students with appropriate offerings at four Illinois universities, as well as to encourage practices at these institutions which are favorable to student clients.

4. New units within established institutions: These programs or units are funded and administered by a single institution, yet they maintain independent brokering functions, not referring clients to only their own institutions' programs. They may be physically separate from the home institution, like the Okanogan County Educational Service in Omak, Washington, which is 100 miles from the home campus of Wenatchee Valley College. They may be on the same campus, like the School for New Learning at DePaul University. They may be multiple off-campus centers, like the Community-Based Educational Counseling for Adults

program centers of the University of Wisconsin. Whatever their location(s), these units counsel prospective adult learners toward learning opportunities of all kinds, not simply those offered by their sponsoring institutions. They are not recruiting offices designed simply to increase one institution's enrollment.

C. The Impacts of Brokering Services

Although most of us have been in operation for a little more than two years, we have felt it imperative to make some early stage assessments of our efforts and impacts. Chapter Nine presents some of our procedures and problems of self-appraisal, and some evidences of our impacts, in greater detail. What we wish to point out here are the general kinds of effects we are having, both on individuals and on institutional policies toward adult learners, in order to further explain "what is brokering?"

With more time and experience under our belts to make longitudinal studies, we can, of course, obtain richer and more accurate assessments/evaluations of our operations. The information below is illustrative rather than definitive.

1. Impacts on Clients

The following quantitative compilations of client service and enrollment figures convey a general notion of the size of some of our agencies' operations, and the numbers of people participating in brokering services:

WINNERS, in Boston, counseled over 700 clients in 1973, their first full year of operation, and 964 in their second year, an increase of 38 percent.

The Regional Learning Service of Central New York (RLS) in Syracuse, had over 2,500 client contacts for information, referral and counseling in the first 21 months of operation. In the first year, 1974, 206 clients undertook three-month counseling contracts; in the next nine months, 255 contracts were set up. Annual rate of increase is 65 percent.

The Community College of Vermont (CCV) in Montpelier has been in operation somewhat longer, and counts its client contacts in terms of CCV-brokered courses of instruction. From 1971 to 1975, numbers of students taking courses increased from 181 to 4,673. In those five years, 11,191 persons have been served by CCV.

The Regional Continuing Education for Women Program (RCEWP) in Philadelphia in its first ten months of operation (to June 1975) had the following levels of activity: 1,700 women for individual counseling, 520 in small group series, and over 3,300 in one-day conferences, workshops and outreach programs.

The Okanogan County Educational Service (OCES) in Omak, Washington, aided 750 clients in its first year. This figure represents

three percent of the entire county population, covering an area larger than Connecticut. Over 150 veterans were enabled to utilize their G.I. benefits, representing over $360,000 in funds.

The Hudson Community College Commission (HCCC) in Hoboken, saw the following enrollment growth in three years: 1st year, 350 (52 FTE); 2nd year, 650 (150 FTE): 3rd year, 1,100 (550 FTE). In the first year of counseling services coordinated with the Educational Opportunity Center (EOC), over 1,200 counseling contacts were made.

In Massachusetts, the Regional Educational Opportunity Centers (REOC) program has served 6,033 participants in the 16 month period ending October 1975. Educational placements were made for over 2,099 of these clients.

More important than the numbers themselves are the rates of increase in enrollments and contacts that a number of us have experienced. What these numbers and rates of increase do not convey, however, is the qualitative dimension of outcomes, the impacts on individual lives. This is where the true excitement of brokering resides for most of us. We see people acquiring degrees and credentials they have long needed or desired; we see people moving up a career ladder or making substantial job changes as a result of our services. We see people able to make decisions about their lives, to act upon a life-plan they have worked out with our counselors. We see people less fearful of learning and change, more confident of their own abilities, more aware of new competencies. These impacts are hard to quantify, yet they are the most meaningful. The individual experiences of some sample clients best demonstrate the impacts of brokering:

John J., mid-twenties, married, several children. . .in an average paying but physically arduous and "dead-end" job. . . had had one semester at a community college before Army, but financial and family responsibilities prevented his return. . . aptitude and interest assessment by a brokering agency revealed potentials for criminal justice field. . .aided by counselor, John got a job in security at local university, with tuition benefits. . . finished two courses, moved to university's independent study degree program. . .with guidance of brokering agency, now working on plans for full-time study at Empire State College to accomplish his goals more quickly.

In addition to individual assessment and information-giving on educational opportunities, brokers also engage in direct personal counseling to aid decision-making. And, as this case illustrates, this is not always done in a one-to-one counseling setting.

Molly, Sue, Mary Ellen, Mary and Elizabeth Ann, five nurses, each single, over 30, in supervisory positions at same hospital. . .all

facing new policy requiring B.S. in Nursing for job advancement. . .came as a group to brokering agency. . .counselor explored in several sessions alternative routes to B.S. degree. . . also guided group and individual decision-making processes. . . on basis of information, support and "life-plans" developed, definite action taken by all five. . .Molly chose to attend Empire State College. . .Sue and Mary Ellen found that their work hours required the flexibility of New York State External Degree Program. . .Mary chose to attend an upper division state college nearby. . .Elizabeth Ann uncovered a basic fear of returning to school and test taking, is working privately with a psychologist to overcome this fear.

Assessment, information-giving and referrals are not always the complete answer. For the adult learner, on-going support and guidance are often as important as selecting the appropriate program.

Jack, early 20s, small family. . .had credits at two community colleges. . .other responsibilities prevented further study. . .Jack wanted a nursing degree, felt completely unable to pursue necessary studies. . .lacked confidence in abilities to return to school. . .explored several programs with brokering agency counselor, selected New York State Regents External Degree. . . could take credits by examination at lower cost and slower pace. . .still needed support and advice until he felt secure enough to tackle independent study. . .with counselor established personal timetable for studies. . .found libraries and hospitals for books and materials to prepare for exams. . .ongoing support from counselor boosted his confidence, kept him on schedule. . .in six months Jack completed five of seven exams, met all general educational requirements.

It is also the broker's role to be an advocate for clients, by intervening with institutional authorities.

Ann, late twenties, retired woman Marine, married with children. . .had some college credits, desired to complete a degree, pursue professional career. . .explored program possibilities with brokering agency counselor, found ideal courses in religion and communications at local university. . .counselor helped her be admitted and gain acceptance of earlier course work. . .counselor worked with college dean on selected studies plan. . .faculty board accepted individualized study plan without change. . . veteran's educational benefits also secured through work of counselor. . .Ann now engaged in periodic counseling at agency and is pursuing aim of becoming writer for religious publications.

Burton, late thirties, black, Army veteran, State Legislator. . .ex-

perienced in human services, taught in private and state colleges. . .desired law degree, but had never received Bachelors. . . brokering agency counselor expedited his application to local college and gained recognition of his life-experience learning. . . 60 semester hours of credit awarded toward B.A. . . .counselor also instrumental in getting him financial aid for first year of study. . .Governor of his state has promised to award Burton his degree in person.

2. Impacts on Institutions

Established academic and social organizations are responsive to our advocacy for institutional changes to accommodate adult learners' needs. Chapter Nine gives specific illustrations of a number of such changes; suffice it to say here that we have seen colleges and universities create new degrees, new majors and programs, counseling services and activities for adult learners as a direct result of our agencies' actions. We have succeeded in gaining recognition for prior learning credits and contract-learning degrees by a number of established institutions. We have seen substantial changes in admissions policies, scheduling, financial aid and part-time enrollment policies.

In the chapters to follow we elaborate on our experiences with services, clients, staff, organization and finances. We do not attempt at this stage to present an evaluation study nor a prescriptive manual. We wish instead to convey some of our excitement about the brokering enterprise and some of what we have learned in our short but rich histories.

CHAPTER TWO

HOW DO WE SELECT OUR SERVICES?

We have described educational brokering as essentially a mediating function between learners and educational resources. It represents an attitude, a set of procedures, a new configuration of educational and human service roles. Brokering puts learners' needs ahead of institutions' needs, operates outside of the usual time and place constraints, and functions not as gatekeeper and pedagogue, but as counselor, advocate, and catalyst. Our services are not unique, in and of themselves, but the ways in which we combine and deliver information, counseling, assessment, advocacy and instruction do mark our special identity.

I. The Problems We Face

This mission invites many possibilities for service. We will not describe here the variety of specific services we offer, but consider the problems faced by all in choosing the services to be pursued by a particular brokering agency:

A. What factors will affect our choice of services?
B. What are the limits on the different kinds and range of services we offer?
C. How can brokering services and instructional services best co-exist?

II. Our Reflections and Strategies

Our choice of specific services to meet the basic brokering functions is influenced by a great number of factors. Obviously influential in designing services are the educational resources in the region, the density and nature of the population, and the sponsorship of the brokering program by a degree-granting institution or independent agency. There are a number of additional considerations in making the choice of services that also should be laid out: several invisible in-

fluences, the breadth of offerings, the appropriateness of teaching, and the way service offerings are interrelated.

A. Invisible Influences

Although not always apparent at the outset, the aims, values, assumptions and personal agendas of the "Founding Directors" and staff do much to determine the nature of services offered by a brokering agency. We have found that profound individual differences in vision and in values can surface during an organization's birth throes.

Some directors and staff members see their involvement in brokering programs as part of establishing a power base in the community for broader social/political influence and change; others may be involved primarily for the human interaction as counselors or teachers with individual clients. Some may be building toward a secure institutional home; others of more cosmopolitan bent may have a shorter time frame and see the brokerage as a steppingstone for other career moves. Much of this is typically unstated. These differences in unexamined assumptions are often the causes of early agency crises. From our experiences, we urge that staff assumptions — philosophical and personal — be examined individually and shared frankly at an early stage.

"Problems of trust, suspicions, and past distressful experience had tremendous influence and became primary movers when decisions had to be made."

——Suzanne Lipsky, WINNERS

Another set of unexamined influences is related to the way we perceive regional client needs. We design services around what we infer from our study of a community before we actually encounter any clients. Unseen biases, misconceptions, and analytical slips can enter in at this point. Local groups are not fully understood by outsiders; potential clients themselves are not always able to clearly identify their specific needs, or to articulate the ones they know well. Unfortunately, we usually cite community needs as the basis for a new mission more often than we use and understand them to design actual services.

Not the least of the determinants of services offered, but sometimes the least obvious, is the nature of financial support. The number and nature of financial sources have a direct effect on program priorities and diversity. Although we do not always like to admit it to ourselves, we often find that services are judged by the question, "What will funders *pay* for?" — rather than "What do learners most urgently *need*?" Moreover, dollars inevitably do bring with them distinct and often incompatible influences on the activities for which they are used. (See Chapter Eight on Finances.)

B. Proliferation of Services

When a new brokering unit is being established, there is a very real

temptation to become all things to all people — and to all prospective funders. We all have tended to take on as many tasks, services and subcontracts as possible so as to prove early viability and to build toward long-term stability. If ten clients can be brought in from a gerontology center, or if a dozen newly-arrived Cuban lawyers can be brought in for language training, the first reaction is "Sign 'em up; we're just getting off the ground and can use the action." And, if the special service contract brings in extra dollars for overhead, it is doubly hard to resist, regardless of its fit with other agency programs.

"As an increasing number of target population students become involved with CCV, the demands placed upon the College to provide a greater range of services increases."

——Mary Wade, Community College of Vermont

The problem emerges quickly, then, when to say, "Enough." There are advantages to having multiple sources of clients and income, and multiple, flexible program offerings. An increase in number and kind of services increases the visibility and credibility of a brokering agency: more people have more points of access and can be helped in more areas and pursuits.

But there are also liabilities incurred when too many diverse activities are attempted. Four particular ones bear mentioning. First, more services generally lead to more staff, and to specialized staff. These additions eventually expand the organizational structure. Soon new programs and sources of income are sought to maintain the structure and its incumbents. Topsy grows. Unfortunately, it is harder to redirect a large, structured agency than a small, loose one. Flexibility and responsiveness to new needs are endangered, and dependence on proven programs is increased.

Second, if too many services are attempted or if new and different services come and go quickly, the identity of the agency is fragmented, and credibility suffers. If the name of the "Great Southeastern Learning Brokerage" is associated with external high school degrees, literacy classes, prenatal training, sit-downs at City Hall, and craft classes for off-duty sailors, its image is blurred, and its purposes may be perceived by skeptical publics as any target of opportunity. "Getting a piece of any action" rather than offering a meaningful and integrated array of programs does not help to develop a steady influx of new clients.

Third, while staff members are stimulated and challenged by a variety of tasks, such diversification extracts a high price from their nervous systems. We have seen tensions and tempers rise with the proliferation of programs and the accompanying logistical snarls.

Finally, the quality of service itself can be eroded when we jump to meet too many specific demands. In our desire to be responsive, we have been tempted to stick our programmatic necks and resources out

for laid-off engineers, exiled Cuban lawyers and isolated farm widows. This kind of overly-specialized service can lead to rampant *ad hocracy* and underprepared and amateurish program offerings.

Carefully planned services for a few target populations with the greatest needs and with long-term potentials will attract more people eventually, and will more effectively use regional educational resources. **"We should do a few things and do them well. This is a pilot period for brokering. Select a target and show a prime example done well to legislators. Take one corporation, one state agency and see what the water is like. Then if it goes, stay with it; stay small. Every time you promise a lot there is disappointment because you can't deliver a lot at the beginning."**

——Michael Kelly, Pennsylvania Adult Counseling Program

Balances must be struck, then, between growth and fragmentation, flexibility and diffuseness, and responsiveness and shoddy opportunism.

C. The Temptation to Teach

Several agencies have had to decide whether to give their own instructional offerings or stick to providing referrals to other institutions. Most of us, with the Community College of Vermont and the Hudson Community College Commission as the principal exceptions, did not initially plan to get into instruction through our own staffs.

There are several compelling reasons for broadening one's services to include teaching. First, teaching one's own courses may be necessary to meet special client needs because institutions are not readily accessible — time, distance, costs, policies — to adult learners. Or, specific courses for adults — learning skills, remedial work, life-planning and values clarification — may not be available, particularly on a non-credit basis. Second, counseling may be done more efficiently in group or course formats; e.g., information sessions, pre-admission orientation, contract-writing. Third, costs of instruction are easier to recover than costs of individual counseling; both clients and employers are more likely to pay for the former. Fourth, agency credibility may increase with the addition of a recognizable academic function, instruction, and with the presence of faculty. Fifth, offering courses permits an agency to bring in people from the community to serve as faculty — the bank president, the union chief, the local craftsman — and thus gain good local legitimacy as well as new friends for the agency.

For these and other reasons, a number of us are increasing our offerings of courses and workshops. There are, nonetheless, several important consequences that we feel ought to be considered in advance of any heavy commitments to instruction. First, a program of instruction changes the agency image in the heads of its clients. It now more resembles their notion of "school," the conventional educational institu-

tion. For some this is positive, for many it is negative and formidable. Second, the freedom to perform the intermediary function, brokering between learners and resources, may be undercut by agency pressures to fill their own classes rather than to refer students to extra-mural learning opportunities. Some degree of institutional neutrality and disinterestedness towards a student's choice of learning options is indispensable to the brokering idea.

Finally, the student loses a personal advocate when the advisor, counselor or learning consultant assumes the duties of a faculty member. If the courses and workshops offered by brokerage agencies are not for academic credit, an instructional and advocacy role can be compatible. But there is a strong tendency eventually to give or to seek academic credit for the significant learning that does take place in such courses and workshops. Advisors and teachers then must attend to academic standards in judging student learning rather than the needs and situations of the students themselves. As faculty, they no longer represent students before the gatekeepers, they become such gatekeepers and certifiers themselves.

To reiterate the point made in our opening chapter, educational brokering represents an attempt to improve services to groups underrepresented in educational institutions; for that reason the roles of advocate and judge must be clearly separated. It is possible to offer instruction in a brokering agency — or, rather, to "mediate" instruction — and still avoid the gatekeeper image. But it is a difficult balance to achieve and maintain.

D. Clarity, Consistency and Credibility

These are paramount concerns in any new organization. It is essential to have a central identity to which internal staff, client constituencies, funding agencies and the general public can relate easily. And this means more than the visibility of a single charismatic leader, the founding director of the agency. Public relations materials, informal contacts and presentations should convey a consistent and unified picture of what a particular educational brokerage is all about. We all depend heavily on word-of-mouth publicity, so the mission must be easily communicable by many who have never heard of educational brokering.

Conversely, one also has to guard against resolving these identity issues prematurely. Our very existence is posited on flexibility and openness. An early closure on services and structure may limit further innovativeness and responsiveness.

Deciding who we are, what we will do, whom we will serve, how we will operate is not easy. It is almost gratuitous to say that these issues must be confronted early and often. But in the heat of daily

decisions and operational crises, we often overlook these basic issues, much to our regret when conflicts arise. We find that it helps to point out the distinction between purpose/identity, on the one hand, and program/services on the other. The basic brokering functions and focus must be conserved for consistency; the specific services to be offered must be continually reconsidered by all agency personnel for flexibility.

1. The Pursuit of Funding. It is typically the matter of funding which crystallizes our purposes and organizational identity and forces us to define our services. The specific catalyst is writing the proposal — for feelers, for friends, for funds. Whether an agency is free-standing, or is an outgrowth of an existing institution, a fiscal decision-maker somewhere along the line has to be convinced of the brokerage's short-term feasibility as well as its potential for long-term growth. Thus, one is forced to make decisions, to clarify vision and intent, to justify planned operations, and to specify desired effects if funding is to be secured. Such an exercise in planning discipline is helpful for moving beyond the talking stages.

A second, less beneficial, consequence of proposal building also must be considered: the funding scramble. Many organizations seeking varieties of revenue agonize overmuch about "What's currently fundable?"; "What's popular in Washington?" Clarity of purpose can disappear as one tries to serve the specific proposal guidelines of many agencies and programs. The caution is to avoid having one's innovativeness and openness prematurely crimped by acceding to the biases or presumed biases of funding agencies. We have found that funders respect people who know and state what they *want* to do, and what they *can* do within certain conditions of time and money.

2. Specifying Outcomes. The development of outcome measures for proposal evaluation plans also helps to clarify program objectives. Most of us have tried to avoid using the typical service units or outcomes indicators such as FTEs, degrees or simple body counts. Rather, we have tried to develop our own criteria for impact and outcomes, several of which are discussed in Chapter Nine. The point here is that we need to describe in some fashion what we intend to do by describing how we will go about assessing what we have done.

"An educational brokering agency should state a scheme for its future, with clear functions and plans for what it hopes to accomplish. We should be hardnosed—and ask ourselves 'what are we trying to change?' When we do this or that, what do we expect to happen, what else might happen, and when? Are we trying to speed up something that is happening anyway? Or are we trying to move mountains with a toothpick? To know ourselves, we are obliged to examine our purposes, to specify objectives, and to

define our expected outcomes, hopefully in some sort of quantifiable terms. That tends to take our work out of the realm of missionary do-gooding. We must face, and try to measure, the probable impacts of our actions and interventions."

——Donald E. Barnes, Capital Higher Education Service

Our problem with defining services and outcomes measures together is that such measures can come to exert more influence on operations than they should. Some of us have felt the pinch of having to report our services and activities in standard formats to outside agencies. We are aware that certain reports must be made, for further funding and for summative evaluation purposes, but we also try to guard against skewing our purposes toward the constraints of reporting schemes.

"Our problem is retaining the flexibility needed to innovate, while fitting the results to the institutional reporting requirements; that is, keeping the reporting requirements from dictating the program."

——Delmar G. Corrick, Okanogan County Educational Service

CHAPTER THREE

WHOM DO WE SERVE?

Although our purpose is to serve the individual adult learner, we obviously cannot deal with the entire universe of persons called adults. To focus our efforts, we need to know the features of the local population which will affect our services and style of operations. This point cannot be overstressed. Dimly perceived learner needs are often expressed in eloquent funding proposal language as the basis for a new mission. They are, many times, less understood and little used to design actual services.

I. The Problems We Face

As we move to concrete planning in new brokering enterprises, the following issues typically seem to emerge:

A. Who are our clients? What are they like? What special characteristics do they have that we must attend to in our outreach and counseling programs?

B. How do we know what they want, what they need from us?

II. Our Reflections and Strategies

A. What Our Clients Are Like

Rather than repeat national survey data on adult learners, we present here some generalizations on some of the attitudinal problems characteristic of clients we have encountered in our respective programs. These bear consequences for attracting people and serving them.

1. Many adults harbor *suspicions* of formal educational institutions. They often select themselves out of opportunities because of bad experiences in the past. To many, school represents unrealistic, arbitrary, and demeaning demands and practices.

2. Dependency characterizes many adults in need of brokering. Few clients are self-starting learners; some have not had the independence nor persistence to deal with the formal system and have

dropped out of it. We face a dilemma when we deal with these students: should we nurture and support them, fight battles for them, so that they will not be threatened and turned off, so they will continue to come? (And risk increasing their dependency?) Or do we challenge them, make them help themselves? (And risk frustrating and losing them?) Do we sit down and read page by page the college catalogues, leading new clients through decisions, or do we show them how to do it and ask them to search for programs themselves?

Achieving the balances between support versus hand-holding, and challenge versus put-down is a sensitive aspect of our counseling efforts with adults. (Sixty percent of the staff at the Community College of Vermont rated "to develop self-respect, self-confidence and self-awareness" as either the most or second most important thing for their adult students to learn.) We do find that once started, after the first grades are given or the first job offered, that their independence and motivation soar.

3. **Adult expectations** are a critical element. Many of our clients have unrealistic expectations or perceptions of themselves, of us as a service agency, or of career and job opportunities. The first are generally too low, the second often too high, the third often too diffuse.

4. **Traditional notions of education** among clients are not always compatible with our services, our style, our purpose. Ironically, we are non-traditional organizations with unconventional programs and services, dealing with people who are often quite traditional, even conservative, in their expectations. A client's preconceptions must be brought out and dealt with before an effective relationship with a brokering unit can begin. We cannot afford to assume that non-structured learning is the style best for all. Neither should we allow learners to elect only old familiar ways of pursuing their educational goals.

5. **Career concerns** motivate most of our clients. This is the principal common characteristic of adult learners which we all have noted. Some feel desperate for change in their status. The following are observations made on a questionnaire by the Learning Consultants (Counselors) of the Regional Learning Service regarding their clients who seek career changes:

a. They often are individuals who are dissatisfied with their present situation without a sense of how to change it.
b. They do not ordinarily set up concrete goals and then go out and seek to attain them.
c. They frequently lack self-confidence. Self-esteem is generally low; most are more aware of their weaknesses than their strengths.

d. Most lack a willingness to take risks in their lives. Just coming to our office is a big step for them.

e. Most cannot describe what they are good at, or what they know; what they need, or where they want to go.

It is particularly the low-income clients who have special difficulties in these areas. As one of the urban-centered brokering agency directors points out:

"Many urban, working class students lack a sense of their future and have little career orientation. They think of their entrance into the world of work as getting a job rather than pursuing a career. They have little sense of occupational structures and the levels of competence within those structures which lead to career advancement."

——Joseph O'Neill, Hudson Community College Commission

Such urban and working class students often have low mobility. O'Neill pointed out that many would not attend any kind of program which was more than twenty minutes away. They also often have an ethnic provincialism — resisting leaving the neighborhood — which reinforces their wariness of institutions as well as their low mobility.

6. Achievement anxiety is also a characteristic of our clients. Some put a great deal of pressure on themselves, are strongly driven by society's stress on credentials or pressure in their jobs for academic legitimization of their abilities. These clients are highly motivated, but also are more impatient and anxious in learning. Their first goal is a degree or certificate; the content or the excitement of learning for its own sake are often secondary. They do not always see realistically the connection, or lack of connection, between their academic and career aims. Sometimes a degree will not make the difference hoped for. In these cases they need to consider possible alternatives to the directions they have started out upon. Women, who make up a large majority of our clients, frequently fall in this category. They generally have not had information on the competencies required to meet their occupational goals. They often have more of these competencies than they realize and the broker can help shorten the distance to certification.

"The risk of failure is greatest for those who regard degrees and certifications important in and of themselves."

——Linda Lehman-Hill, Regional Learning Service

Finally, lest we portray our clients as unhappy or frustrated, we hasten to add that they are also a singularly inspiring bunch, too. We all hold a deep admiration and respect for them. These people are exciting and engaging to work with; contact with them is the great

reward in the job of brokering. They have a spark, a desire—albeit often stifled or sub-conscious—to grow, to change their lives. Despite their uncertainties, their fits and starts, they have real ambitions for themselves which they are bravely trying to fulfill. It is tough to face past failures or missed opportunities, and struggle with personal change in the adult years. Our clients have the kind of vitality to face these tough issues.

B. Analyzing Adult Learner Needs

As the preceding descriptions suggest, the range of client needs among our agencies is quite broad. In response to the question of "How do we know what they want or need from us?", we can suggest two contrasting approaches to determining learner needs. Among the project directors there exists a tendency to be either a "seat of the pants flier" or a "social science technician." That is, we each tend to emphasize primarily informal or formal strategies for assessing learner characteristics and needs. Each approach has its own consequences.

The "seat of the pants" school favors building up impressions from various constituencies as to what learning needs exist in the community. Personal contacts, informal information gathering, reviews of community characteristics are conducted with such people as newspaper editors, social agency heads, school officials, personnel managers, service organization and planning agency heads. This is a lengthy, subjective, loose process which establishes links for later developments. It fosters grass-roots contacts and a sense of community involvement and input. It can produce a rich picture of the region, its resources, and many options for organizational direction, as well as a feeling for the probabilities of success associated with those options. At the same time, the process is prone to selective inattention, subjectivity, persuasive interest groups, and charges of unprofessional dalliance. And a lot of long, heavy lunches.

The social scientists among us would opt for the more objective, procedurally sound, and systematic approaches. That is, examination of economic and social factors, sub-sector analyses, growth trends, cultural and value patterns, inventories of educational and training resources, and surveys of would-be learner preferences to systematically build a picture of the social and educational needs of the area. Existing census and industrial data would be utilized, formal surveys would be mounted; quantitative data would be assessed through various economic and sociological models for forecasting and needs projections. The product of such formal analyses would serve as a guide for planning, priority setting and program/services design.

What we all have realized, however, is that the utility of such an approach depends on the power and the feasibility of the methods

themselves. There are serious limitations on each count. Even though they gobble enormous amounts of data and generate intricate projections and analyses, the social science methods are still inadequate on technical grounds. They are not yet infallible. Survey technologies, analytical model-building and educational-demand theories are insufficiently sophisticated to handle the vast numbers of variables and interactions which come into play in complex modern social and community systems. Second, their feasibility often is limited: data-collection costs, expensive analysts' time, and simple availability of data — coupled with still uncertain "fallible" outcomes — make the sophisticated R&D work-up unsuitable in many cases. Especially for new ventures like brokerages with small staffs, limited funding, pressure for early and visible performance, and somewhat of a "latter-day Luddite" feeling about social statistics!

In each agency setting, we make our choices among the consequences and achieve our own balance between the two tendencies. The degree of political talent or the technical competence of the founding director's staff usually will determine how needs are assessed.

Whatever the combination of grass-roots data collection and analytical-theoretical projections, the point is that initial and continuing needs analyses are central to knowing how to make the brokering agency useful to its constituents. As an agency becomes more well known, its clientele can change, and community or business needs can change. Thus, needs analysis of some sort must be an on-going activity if we are to know clearly whom we are serving.

CHAPTER FOUR

HOW DO WE STAFF OUR OPERATIONS?

This chapter is purposely placed before our discussion of organizational structure in order to highlight our conviction that client needs and staff needs come before considerations of structure. We believe that brokerages should first design services for learners and bring together staff to do these jobs, and only then create organizational structures to fit and support those services and staff. People should be a part of inventing the organization, and how they fit into it — their roles, their influence, their coordination. We are trying, after all, to practice our own preaching. The ideology behind the brokering mission itself is to "liberate" people by facilitating their educational development, and to enable them to gain more control over their lives. Our staff relationships, and the ways we organize our own operations, should reflect this same ideology of liberation — freeing people from static kinds of job roles which are determined by organizational structures rather than individual skills and interests.

In our experience, the issues surrounding staff roles, agency expectations and staff selection, training, renewal and rewards are extremely difficult to tease apart. We are constantly reminded that relationships among individuals, their roles and organizational dynamics are organic, and inextricably intertwined. They cannot be dealt with singly — as we must do below for descriptive purposes — if their substance and implications are to be fully understood.

I. The Problems We Face

A. What is the nature of roles performed in a brokering agency? What kinds of people should be sought to fill these roles?

B. What are the benefits and drawbacks in having central, full-time staff or extended, part-time staff? How does this affect our services, procedures, and our impacts?

C. How do we select and train staff? When? How are staff efforts and energies sustained?

II. Our Reflections and Strategies

Specific responses to these questions are guided by our respective purposes and the kinds of staff people available to us. The key principle in working out staff-agency roles and relationships seems to be *flexibility*, particularly in coming to the specific compromises and choices for balance discussed below.

A. Kinds of People

Brokerages work best which build in an adaptability and a permeability for many groups and individuals. This requires a certain *ad hoc* attitude, an ability to see new openings, to back out of blind alleys, to sustain a temporariness in relation to sub-projects — or, conversely — to resist their *pro forma* institutionalization.

Although obvious at face value, the importance of selecting compatible, flexible, people-oriented staff cannot be overstressed. Educational brokerages, like many new ventures, often can be personality pressure cookers. The role demands and the pace means that prima donnas, intrusive egos, personally-insensitive types or structure freaks can quickly derail an entire operation.

Most of the brokering agencies agree that staff should be generalists, with more than one specialty. And there are such people. Bi-lingual mechanics; reading specialist counselors; group-worker chemists; business-wise craftsmen. Most communities are full of people with local savvy, special resources and talents, and a real capacity and desire for helping adult learners of many stripes and styles. Also essential for staff is an ability to deal with many kinds of people in many settings and levels, from the mayor and college president to the union steward or neighborhood chieftain.

The capstone element, of course, has to be that of leadership. Successful brokering start-ups require a highly entrepreneurial, singularly self-starting style. Initiative and clarity of vision must be coupled with a taste for politics and a strong sense of timing. The existing brokering programs each seem to have at their head some sort of charismatic leader type who is task-oriented and deeply-committed, yet whose zeal does not extend to running all over his staff. Achieving this balance beforehand is, regrettably, about as easy as choosing one's parents.

Duties change as the organization changes; a sense of routine or individual areas of specialization are not easily developed. Then, too, some of the multiple roles clash; e.g., the "learning facilitator" versus the "teacher," or the "counselor" versus the "assessor." These roles require different relationships between client and staff; e.g., supportive or authoritarian.

Staff abilities to handle the strains of many role expectations also are affected by their own commitments and characteristics; how they relate to the agency — a part-time versus a full-time basis, a short-term versus a long-term commitment — and how they relate to their own professional lives outside their brokering agency roles.

For the central staff there arises a particularly acute problem of role change as the organization matures. The founding directors and core staff are typically good at, and generally most enjoy, the early development period. This is a time which requires real entrepreneurial spirit, fast and creative footwork in planning and building a new organization. But there also comes a time when the organization's activities shift from "start-up" to "running." Maintenance, management, and evaluation activities begin to increase; the pace and style of operations begin to change. Initial enthusiasms can dwindle as operations are less free-wheeling.

"The implicit value is that 'pioneering is where it's at,' and everything thereafter is entropy. Winging it *is* vital, but maintenance is the real toughie. Things get less noble and glamorous as you go along, but it's the day-by-day maintenance that determines if you'll make it."

——Peter Smith, Community College of Vermont

B. Roles Required of Staff

Educational brokerages embody a range of different, and, in many cases, new kinds of organizational roles. The broker's advocate role between student, or would-be student, and established educational institutions is especially new for all of us. Staff must perform a variety of tasks which are unfamiliar to them, are shared, temporary and changeable, and often carry incompatible role demands. The duties for a staff member at one agency are typical:

- Serve as Program Advisor (learning consultant, counselor) for assigned clients.
- Evaluate prior experiences, training and education of clients.
- Prepare portfolios in support of college admissions applications.
- Assist with public relations work, client recruitment.
- Contribute to proposal writing.
- Develop and maintain internal records, operational procedures, reports.
- Conduct information and orientation sessions.
- Develop curricula for group counseling seminars for career and educational planning.
- Assist with conferences and workshops.
- Visit training directors in business, industry, other agencies.
- Serve on college and association/consortium committees.

- Keep up to date on programs, resources, referral opportunities.

—— 1974 Progress Report, Capital Higher Education Service

C. Staff Relationships to the Agency

1. Part-Time Versus Full-Time Staff. The essential question here is "how does the balance between part-time and full-time staff affect our services for the individual learner?"

Certainly, staff arrangements are determined by our respective missions, programs, place in an external structure and finances. Some agencies are staffed entirely by full-time employees, some are all part-time except for a director; most, however, are a mixture. What is the best mixture?

We do agree that some central, full-time staff are necessary for coordination, and "buck-stops-here" authority. Even if decision-making and planning are shared in a non-hierarchical structure, some identifiable individuals must represent the project for continuity and contacts. This role typically is played by an agency director or a small core staff.

In coming to decide on one's configuration of part-time and full-time workers a number of trade-offs are involved, and some tricky balances have to be achieved if learner needs and agency operations are to be served. Our experience suggests that the elements of diversity, continuity and commitment are especially germane.

a. Greater *diversity* is possible by using more part-timers and fewer full-timers. Flexibility and responsiveness are enhanced by diversity in geographic spread (especially in rural areas like Vermont), range of resources and talents, and links to the community for referral of clients. Conversely, there is some loss of *depth* across a wide range of staff; full-timers are an advantage when special-focus programs are mounted, such as assessment projects or lobbying efforts.

b. The degree of *continuity* with the agency is relatively greater for full-time staff. Lines of communication for information and decision-making are less complicated, coordination is more efficient. Part-timers require more management efforts and "keeping up" with agency activities. Yet they also enjoy a different and greater continuity — with the community itself. By staying in their own jobs, part-timers' links are maintained, contacts are immediate and useful; the news from the streets is up to date, and new clients are recruited more easily.

c. The degree of *commitment* of part-timers and full-timers is one which we do not feel is a real issue, but one which frequently is raised in planning discussions, and by outsiders. Given their other job and family responsibilities, can part-timers be expected to be as deeply committed to the brokering agency's activities? As pointed out in a following section, we have found that they definitely are. The converse

question is also an important one to consider: can full-time staff feel as free to take risks or to innovate, invent and change, given their dependence on a full-time job relationship? Some of us feel that there can be such a loss in flexibility, regardless of levels of commitment or loyalty. Obviously, this is an issue that has many elements to consider. **"Personally, I think part-time counselors don't have enough time to do all that needs to be done to establish rapport with counselees, other staff, to write up reports, and so forth. Less than 3/4 time is not worth it. It is not a problem of loyalty. You have to rearrange everything around part-time help—like staff meetings—if they are to be included in everything. Also, counselees come in and need help right then; they don't want to wait 'till next week."**
—Marguerite Goodwin, WINNERS

2. Faculty. A related issue arises for brokerages which are involved in instruction (Community College of Vermont, Hudson Community College Commission) regarding the appointment of faculty: "Should we hire our own?" "How many?" "On what basis?" On the one hand, an agency may gain legitimacy in the eyes of funding and/or accrediting agencies when it employs bona fide academicians as instructors. It may be able to offer courses and learning experiences which are easily transferrable. However, the agency might suffer some losses in credibility in the eyes of its potential local clients by hiring faculty who could be perceived as symbols of "going academic," or who could re-stimulate past bad experiences which turned them off originally. Program flexibility is restricted by having salary dollars and program offerings tied to the skills and specialties of a faculty cadre. Finally, flexibility of faculty themselves is a real question. Can they serve several masters? That is, can they divide their attention among their own professional/scholarly fields, their "home" institution, a brokering agency, and, ultimately, the needs of adult or non-traditional learners?

We do not see hard and fast answers to these questions. On the issue of legitimacy versus flexibility, there is an obvious and effective compromise in adjunct appointments and short-term contracts. Academic respectability — and standards — can be enjoyed without locking into the "academic procession," which is too often a slow shuffle.

Most of us enjoy other forms of expert assistance, such as short-term, intense interactions with consultants and advisory panels. Their aid with client service planning, staff training, evaluation or needs analysis is less costly, over time, than bringing anyone to the staff permanently with the same expertise or reputation.

3. Paper Flow and Zeal. Since many of us do depend heavily on part-time staff, two final observations seem in order here. First, we have found that the continuity and coordination problems of part-time

staff can be met partly through plain old "routine paper flow": the procedures for logging time, setting contracts, exchanging information, reporting progress. Well-organized bookkeeping done by a full-time staff person for a number of part-time people can more than make up for the continuity and coordination which is enjoyed with a full-time staff working in closer interaction with each other. Also, we have created a number of ways to bring ourselves together: monthly meetings and mailings, subgroup and task force meetings with part-timers serving as team leaders, periodic staff and training meetings held at different branch sites, informal newsletters and telephone conference calls.

Second, we must point up the factor of economic feasibility. With fixed budgets, and future budgets likely being restricted, the part-time staff arrangement is more attractive. There are greater cost-benefit returns since costs of fringe benefits and higher professional salaries are not incurred, and the load carried is proportionately heavier. (The sum of ten half-time workers' load always exceeds that of five full-timers.) Part-timers also are more economical in that when they aren't working, they aren't costing. This is important during the start-up period when we don't know our demands, and when full-time counselors might be sitting around until clients appear. Finally, we now realize that we couldn't begin to afford our talented part-timers on a full-time basis. They represent a range of skills and resources we just could not get any other way.

An irony emerges here, related to part-timers' costs and the questions about their commitment. That is, part-time staff usually tend to work far more than the time they are paid for. They often must be protected from their own eagerness, to a point where they need to be elbowed out of the building. The pressure to over-work comes from within themselves, from clients, and from other staff members. These people are not clock-punchers; they feel real commitment to a cause, to a totally new venture. The compelling pressures for overload are hard to resist, yet such overload can result in real personal strain. A love/hate relationship, a resentment at being imposed on — even though it is self-inflicted — grows, and part-timers feel caught in a real bind. They are reluctant to ask for additional salary to cover their overtime, because of their commitment to the new and struggling agency, yet they rightfully resent the under-compensation. This is a tough situation to deal with; "combatting over-commitment" is a paradoxical notion, yet in the long run it is an important one for staff and agency to resolve.

D. Staff Selection, Training, Renewal and Rewards

In addition to what already has been said about selecting compatible and people-oriented staff, the selection process also should be a time

for clarifying individuals' interests and intents, and assessing how they match with organizational purposes.

"A quality we look for is how much in tune with themselves prospective staff are, and how conscious they are of themselves and the kinds of models they will be."

——Peter Smith, Community College of Vermont

The question of whom to select also raises the issue of whether the staff should be made up of professionals or lay people. Agencies' relationships with clients, services offered and finances available for salaries often are chief determinants of the eventual mixture of personnel. Some brokering agencies consciously have chosen one form over the other. The Regional Learning Service feels that good counselors and learning consultants are produced by life experiences as much as by formal training. They select natural counselors from the community, people without academic credentials for whom others feel an affinity and openness, and who have been counseling informally for years. They provide grass-roots links, a freshness of approach and uncommon energy. In another model, the Capital Higher Education Service, more full-time staff are employed, with formal preparation and professional experience in counseling or teaching. This model has advantages, particularly where instruction for credit is offered or where life-experience credit assessments are made.

How people are trained may be affected in large measure by *when* they are brought into the agency. Two agencies have used a lengthy staff selection and training procedure to design, at the same time, many of the services and procedures of the agency itself (WINNERS, RLS). Feelings of group ownership and commitment to the resultant product are thus very high. Many creative side-projects are mounted, and solidarity within the group is enhanced. (The lead-in time was used at WINNERS and RLS to give counselors first-hand contact with referral agencies and to establish information banks for later referral uses.) However, start-up time is slower and more expensive, and an itch to "see real people rather than plan" does emerge. It is also more difficult to trickle in new staff after the initial training period.

"We are a very close-knit organization, and that makes it harder for new people to move in here. So that is a generational problem. The more you succeed in creating some sort of group ethos, the more difficult it is to absorb newcomers."

——Fran Macy, Regional Learning Service

On the other hand, some agencies have taken in clients almost immediately, while still in their planning, development and training stages (CHES and RCEWP). This speeds up activities immeasurably, and gives an immediacy, specificity and real world feel to staff delibera-

tions. As real problems are confronted, staff interests fairly flame, but some also burn out. Some staff feel underprepared and unsure; some situations get badly handled, and credibility suffers. Again, the crux of the matter may be financial; a long think-tank training period versus a "90-Day Wonder" pace may depend strictly upon the kinds of funds available.

Renewal. A second set of problems relates to staff renewal. A perennial problem with these new and exciting enterprises is maintaining that newness and excitement in the face of role overloads, constant change and plain old-fashioned fatigue. We all see our staff's spiritual exhaustion as a generic problem in these fast-moving operations. How do we pay the toll which our activities exact? How do we renew ourselves?

There is one point we strongly agree on: People need "downtime." Periods for reflective thinking for core staff, or retreats and reassessment sessions for part-time and adjunct staff are essential. Our purposes can become blurred, our friendships can become strained, our creativity can become merely reactive in the fast pace of hustling a new venture if we don't take time out. This is a homely but easily forgotten point. All of us need time for thinking, "R&R," and a chance to appreciate each other and what we are doing.

To reiterate an earlier point, it is part of the ideology of the educational brokering mission to free people, to enrich their lives, by fostering better use of their own resources and potentials. Relationships within the organization itself should be no different; we should constantly be seeking the richest and most "growthful" relationships for our own staff, too. Both personal and professional growth for staff require earnest efforts to get away for a while, to re-charge, revivify, to examine what we are all about.

Rewards. Unlike most organizations, we have not based our rewards structure on money, title or hierarchy distinctions. Most of our counselors count their rewards in terms of interpersonal and psychic returns. We have been able to enhance such returns by matching peoples' roles in the agency with the kinds of things which personally and professionally turn them on. That is, we try to design role and function assignments for staff people which most interest them, most absorb their interests and stimulate their best work. This makes for a working atmosphere remarkably clear of intra-organizational competitiveness. Each individual is rewarded in a way that is personally meaningful.

Brokerage work is diffuse, changeable, and new to most staff. Because of this, and because we do not utilize the conventional rewards, we must clearly and frequently communicate assessments of job per-

formance to our staff. They all need to know "how am I doing?" Evaluation should inform staff as to how well they are performing their jobs in such a way that links that performance to institutional mission and agency priorities. A useful staff evaluation should allow individuals to answer the question "How *am* I helping this enterprise, anyway?" Again, the theme is one of development and supportiveness, meeting individuals where they are, respecting their own points of view and expectations.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW DO WE ORGANIZE OUR OPERATIONS?

The educational brokerage movement is comprised of high energy, person-oriented and creative people. Organizing their energies and new ideas into a workable structure is not always easy. The issues relating to organizational arrangements for functions, responsibilities and governance seem to be variations on one basic theme: achieving the best match of institutional structures with our chosen mission and our own personnel.

"The common concern for this issue [of staff and structure] was to use multi-talented people who have a variety of values and skills to further a single institutional mission, while at the same time enabling them to honor their own interests and philosophies. This is a common difficulty because the very nature of new adventures attracts people who have high human concerns, a definite set of beliefs, and not only a basic dislike for the usual bureaucratic systems of management, but little experience with management in any form!"

——Anne Lynn, Community College of Vermont

I. The Problems We Face

A. What is the appropriate style of management in such agencies? How are group participation and individual leadership balanced for effective management? How are multiple roles and functions coordinated? Most important, how is decision-making shared?

B. How is internal governance affected by one's membership in larger systems or organizations? How does one's niche in the broader scheme of governance and control affect agency autonomy, flexibility?

C. How does structure change over time? How does it change as mission and personnel change? How does an agency move into

its Second Generation phase after the original staff or start-up funds are gone?

II. Our Reflections and Strategies

In facing these questions, we have found that they divide themselves into internal and external factors. The impacts of the former are predominant; the latter, we think, are overemphasized. Also, we feel that a futures consciousness is very important in examining organizational structure; i.e., planning for what an organization will look like down the road a ways.

A. Internal Structures

As adult educator Cyril Houle points out, educational brokerages function on a horizontal dimension, as middlemen/mediators across a broad front, as opposed to the vertical dimension of most educational institutions. This definitely affects their organizational structure. A hierarchical format, distinct lines of responsibility/authority, and internal "turf" hegemonies simply are not appropriate for such operations. More suitable are flat organization charts, easy crossing of turf lines, and sharing of responsibility.

This point leads to a more important observation about how *mission* relates to structure, how our very ideology affects our internal organization. As human service organizations, we attempt to relate to clients/learners in very flexible, open, non-restrictive ways. We seek staff who do the same, and who can relate to each other in the same open, facilitative manner. This requires an internal organizational structure which fosters liberation rather than control, creativity and change rather than protection of the status-quo, and a differentiated, free-wheeling style rather than a straitened, linear approach.

But a counterpoint must quickly be made here: freedom, creativity and self-fullfillment do not occur under conditions of anarchy. Total absence of structure begets no real progress; if staff are confused about their roles, and authority is too diffuse, then unproductive tensions emerge. We try to seek balances between rigor and rigidity on the one hand, and between freedom and chaos on the other.

This balance is nowhere more critical than in organizational decision-making. A totally participatory mode usually leaves uncertainties as to "who does what?", "how is it to be done?" and, ultimately, "who decides who decides?" A totally autocratic mode usually kills creativity and the richness of group contributions. Our resolution of this control and decision-making problem is not in itself unique, but it does follow from our basic values; we return again to ideology.

We know that many decisions are made in our organizations — *by*

many people, *with* many people, *for* many people — which cannot and should not be centralized. This is a prime feature of our identity as brokers. Such being the case, we believe in channeling more group efforts toward *communication* and *planning*. That is, utilizing the broad talents represented by our staffs as the principal governance mechanism. Thus, internal governance is eased by a constant sharing of information, staff are kept up to date on problems, decisions and outcomes, and a steady, open flow of discourse within the agency is maintained. Second, on-going planning is essentially an integrating process. With staff involved in all phases of agency planning and problem solving, we can come closer to organic, evolutionary change rather than change-through-crises. One model of this is suggested by the Regional Learning Service, where periodic workshops or retreats are held for staff renewal and agency planning. The extended staff — all part-time — form subgroups and task forces to present new developments, discuss operational problems, and plan future agency directions. **"People at RLS *own* this organization. They work through where it's going and how to get there. My status as a full-time staff member is to help that happen by keeping the pieces together and by making sure that we continue to spend significant time together, focusing and refocusing on what we are about."**

——Donn Vickers, Regional Learning Service

This point highlights another important factor in considerations of organizational structure: structure ought not be an end in itself. It simply organizes our activities and helps us get where we'd like to be. **"What is important is the process, the using of your structure. Making it work, knowing how and when and for what purpose it can be used."**

——Peter Smith, Community College of Vermont

A candid observation is in order here. Despite our best intentions, we often are our own worst enemies when it comes to establishing organizational structures and planning procedures. Two factors most frequently prevent us from following our own advice. First, the "charismatic leader" types who are the founding directors may be reluctant to share the decision-making and control over their nurtured brain-children. They are understandably directive; after all, their vision and drive got the organization going. Either their sense of paternal prerogative is high, or else they are still spinning off new ideas and adding greater scope to the vision, leaving others to catch up. In either case, such matters as organizational procedures are not the most engaging concern.

Second, the character of our staffs is frequently anti-structure and anti-planning; any forms of control are viscerally rejected. These are

"people" people; they are compassionate, participatory, anti-procedural. They spark off ideas, but are less effective on focus and follow-through. So communication and planning, though necessary, are not always easily achieved. They often must be interposed among some strong-minded personnel to whom the notion of "structure for your own good" is anathema.

Finally, there does appear to be some sort of working balance, a certain compromise that we have achieved, centered toward the flexible side.

"Given that we have so many clients and so many staff involved at different times, levels, and places throughout five counties, and so many new directions, resources and contacts to keep track of, there will always be something falling between the cracks. There is inevitably organizational slippage, missed opportunity, dropped options. We have more ideas than we can develop. We realize that our nature is such — generically broad based — that there will always be some misses, particularly in the formative years. This is frustrating at times. But we all choose to be open and loose, and experience some gaffes, rather than be highly structured for efficiency, and lose our responsiveness and creativity. We are constantly aware of this need to improve planning and follow-up."

——Fran Macy, Regional Learning Service

B. External Structures

As we point out in Chapter Six, relationships with external agencies do much to affect the character of a brokering agency. The way an agency is embedded in other social or educational systems can have a great impact on its internal organizational structures as well; particularly the authority and flexibility of its director and the influence of staff in decisions.

But as we have considered this point, the project directors have come to feel that this kind of influence does not *have* to predominate, that many of us may let it happen unnecessarily. We are discovering that there is much less control — or desire for it — over internal decision-making on the part of external agencies than any of us had assumed. There is more room to maneuver inside an organization, more independence and autonomy, than we ever attempt to use. Only the slightest gambler's nerve to take the initiative is required.

Assertion of autonomy in internal governance depends to a large degree on an agency's financial independence. As soon as a brokering project can begin to raise its own money, its latitude for self-direction begins to broaden greatly.

Related to this is the way an agency is linked to larger systems of budget control and governance. Several of us are part of state educational systems (CCV, HCCC); while others are sub-programs of established institutions (RCEWP, OCES). Influence by these larger organizations can be quite direct. Still others of us are free-standing units which raise their own funds, either singly or as part of free-standing consortia (WINNERS, CHES, RLS). Such agencies are independent from any single source of support and/or policy. As such, they enjoy a unique and interesting opportunity to create their own policy or advisory boards and can themselves decide how much they will be influenced internally.

But whether an agency puts together its own set of external relationships, or inherits a niche in a larger structure, the key word seems to be *initiative*. Taking the lead in setting one's own goals and plans, and carrying them out in ways most comfortable with one's own staff styles is not at all impossible. There is more flexibility to be taken advantage of than we think.

C. *Futures Consciousness*

Operating in what is, to say the least, an unpredictable environment, we believe that it is important constantly to look ahead to alternative futures and directions. Even as we have planned to get into business, many of us are outlining the conditions of our necessary transformation or eventual termination. The identity of the organization in its Second Generation, once up and running or after development monies are spent, will inevitably change. Preparation for phasing out, or for phasing into other programs' purview must at least be considered. There also will come a day when the founding directors or core staff will move on. This important watershed event should be planned for, if only to get the gold watches ordered and inscribed properly.

Phases of Agency Life-History. Less facetiously, we would like to point up a general pattern of growth, evolution and possible destinations of brokering agencies as institutions. These phases of life-history differentially represent our past, present and future.

1. **The think-tank and gestation phase** is the period of generating the idea, the ideology; the lead-in time for working out the concept, overall plans. A long-ish warm-up period when the founding directors—and maybe a small staff — spend time in contemplation, consultation, ideas exchange and observation. The community is studied, resources explored, funding possibilities assayed, and general feasibility tested.

"I spent three months studying the 1970 census and learning what Hudson County is all about. I don't think I could have done the job

without that gestation period. . . .Principal staff persons become so imbued with the facts of life of the community that the later decisions come easily."

——Joseph O'Neill, Hudson Community College Commission

2. The start-up phase is not as long, typically, as the lead-in and gestation period. This is a time when more staff are brought on board, the idea and the programs are actively pushed, and much more community interaction is begun. Specific proposals for funding are generated at this time; consortium or inter-institutional arrangements are firmed up. Facilities, publicity and staff training materials also begin to take shape; initial plans about services, clientele and procedures are set, and a few pilot clients may be taken on.

3. The first active operations are essentially part of a *demonstration phase*, in that they are not totally self-sustaining. These are the first operational years which are supported by start-up monies, development funds, and short-term grants from such agencies as FIPSE or the Carnegie Corporation or state education departments. Many more clients are taken on, client outreach is further refined, more staff may be trained, and satellite centers may be opened. Program diversity enlarges; management and maintenance concerns rise in importance. Some changes may occur in original core staff two or three years out. Firmer links are established with regional educational institutions, and some of their own procedures may begin to change.

4. The end of start-up grants marks a critical watershed for a brokering agency. Federal and foundation monies typically are to be used for R&D and initial feasibility demonstration, not for support of on-going operations. At the time of our Spring 1975 conferences, two of us (CHES and WINNERS) were within 18 months of this point.

5. The "Phase-X" operational phase is that unknown period facing us when we must stand on our own, run on our own funds. Our viability must be proven by this point for other funding sources to be attracted. For some of us this may mean greater dependence on client fees, or state subsidies, or special program contracts. For others it may mean joining with a larger organization, or dispersing staff and programs to a series of related agencies. We might join up with a higher education consortium, or a university's continuing education division, or find places within local social agencies for counseling, vocational training, or information/referral. The agency may choose to remain together without the more costly salaries of directors and central staff; part-timers would coordinate overall operations. Staff might move to a voluntary or semi-voluntary basis; their home agencies would permit release time for continuing brokering activities.

In some agencies, their "Phase-X" future will be completely a

function of the agency director. He may seek to hold the agency together through alternative funding sources, or take steps to export its programs to other organizations.

In other agencies, the staff, even if all part-timers, may directly determine the fortunes of the brokerage. An illustration of this kind of futures consciousness and planning for "Phase-X" is seen in the Regional Learning Service. The entire staff retreated in May 1975 to a pastoral college campus for a weekend of frank discussion of RLS futures, through a highly participatory exploration of alternative directions for programs. The agenda for their session and the ways the group worked together were as follows:

The Wells College Retreat — Designing RLS for the Future

A. The place from which we are building.

1. What have we come to value in RLS? What do we want to hold on to, sustain? (Sharing of individual observations.)
2. What are the present time and money constraints, timetables? What are funders' program guidelines and limits? How are we consuming resources? (Director's presentation.)

B. Creating a new design.

1. Laying out all possible alternatives for service and delivery, staff and structure, new clientele, financial resources (group brainstorming).
2. Refinement of alternatives, hottest ideas (small group task forces).
3. Presentations of ideas in categories; getting priorities for new directions, programs to mount (large group exchanges).

C. Planning and implementing new design.

1. Establishing long- and short-term time lines to achieve the new design (large group exchanges).
2. Establishing study groups, area task forces to work out alternatives chosen (group leaders; individual group sign-ups).

For RLS, the weekend retreat resulted in a clear commitment and concrete plans to design a future for the agency after its development monies were exhausted. The responsibility for redesigning and for continuing RLS functions were taken on by three planning teams of Learning Consultants. In six weeks, options for new clientele, new revenue sources and new programs were investigated, and RLS began its moves toward a self-supporting status.

Other brokerages are broadening their bases of support by taking on new functions. WINNERS, the free-standing agency in Boston, is developing new services related to child care, health programs and other training activities for low-income women, in order to sustain their overall operations at the conclusion of soft-money contracts.

CHAPTER SIX

HOW DO WE RELATE TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS?

In the mailed survey to brokering project directors conducted in winter, 1974, the most pressing problem noted was "convincing traditional institutions to accept our activities." The Montpelier and Hoboken meetings echoed this point, and underlined the central importance of establishing links with other educational, training and social agencies for service referrals, and with non-educational organizations for client referrals. These are what some of us have termed the "Third Agencies." These linkage relationships are the essential bread and butter of the brokering function. By definition, we have few resources of our own; our sole production function is to provide access to a number and variety of outside learning resources for our clients.

The issue of external linkages has three aspects: sources for the inflow of new clients, liaisons for political benefit, and targets for referrals for service. We will deal mostly with the latter two aspects in this section; outreach to clients is discussed in Chapter Seven. The principal issues faced with regard to external relationships are rather straightforward: 1) *setting up* linkages with other institutions, and 2) *maintaining* effective relationships, keeping up contacts, interests and accurate information flow.

I. The Problems We Face

A. How and at what levels does one initiate links with established academic institutions to serve adult clients? How can credibility be built up with them? How does one attract their interest in taking on new, and, to them, atypical students? How can they be shown what brokering does — for them and for learners?

B. How do new brokerage programs find and link into regional/community networks for counseling, education, other human services? How does one get inside to get something going? How are consortium relationships established?

C. How do brokering agencies deal with quality differences in services available? How can one affect the value of others' services for one's own clients? How can one influence others' policies and practices in dealing with adult learners?

D. How does an agency link up with agencies whose purposes are similar to its own to press for policy changes favorable to adult educational programming? Are there others who should be joined with in loose coalitions around specific policy issues or legislation?

II. Our Reflections and Strategies

The program directors' exchange of ideas on how we variously cope with linkages and networks among regional institutions produced several specific practical responses as well as some points which sound a lot like old political chestnuts. The chestnuts are those eternal verities of organizational life to which most institutions adhere—at least the realistic and adaptable ones. Such caveats are rarely articulated; they're too close to homely homilies. Yet, as we have reflected upon our short histories, we see that we all have been tacitly attending to these simple axioms. And, where we have had problems, we seem to have regretfully overlooked them.

A. The Third Agencies

1. Their Point of View. First, it must be remembered that all of the institutions with which brokering agencies deal do have lives of their own. They all have their own histories, they all have their own purposes, they all fit, somehow or other, into the regional political topography. Before any relationship will be successful, the brokering agency must be able to meet those institutions where they stand in their own context. All of the institutions — colleges, businesses, social agencies — have their own needs, anxieties, agendas, position and link-ups in the power structure, and their own programs, personnel and roles, clientele and constituents. It is critical to be mindful of each of these elements.

"Any government agency is in the business of serving people, but each agency looks at that person as *his* problem, not *our* problem. However, education has a place in the activities of every agency."

——Michael Kelly, Pennsylvania Adult Counseling Program

It cannot be overstressed that the greater the foreknowledge of these organizations, the easier it will be to establish linkages. A great deal of homework must be done beforehand in initiating contacts with colleges or businesses or larger associations in order to find out about the elements mentioned above. Additionally, some anticipated "first meeting reactions" should be played out: just how will faculty at the

local nursing college respond to the possibilities of former Army medics enrolling for professional nurses' degrees? Does a nearby university yet deal with award of credit for life experience? Good foreknowledge of institutional character and of key people who are respected as watch-dogs of academic excellence are part of this first meeting preparation.

A corollary to this point is our observation that one also needs to be aware of the "what's in it for us?" factor. "What do we, as a college, gain from this arrangement, anyway?" (Self-interest questions typically are more indirect—and it's sometimes best to keep them so—but they always are there.) The demonstration of the mutuality of benefits and the positive multiplier effects arising from such relationships is critical to establishing linkages. If institutions are approached in terms of their own needs and desires, and can see that the rendering of service—instructional, counseling, training—is beneficial to their own interests, usually the only remaining problems are logistical.

2. Opening the Doors. This suggestion leads to an obvious question: how does one convince a President or Dean that one's agency does bear something of value, an interest in common? How is the case made?

Essentially, we are back to the issue of clarity of mission, purpose and services. It must be clear to college administrators just what an agency is all about in the first place. The brokering notion itself must be sold to them. It is useful to approach early those most likely to be allies, those known to be sympathetic to the cause. If he is directly asked, the President will not likely refuse to appoint an institutional representative to a brokerage's planning or advisory committee. Faculty also should be approached early; we have learned that it is a mistake to involve them only after the administrators seem to be on board. Moreover, the case for brokering must be presented in terms of the legitimate self-interests and the carefully researched nature of the college itself.

Second, and more directly important, is the issue of demonstrating outcomes to Third Agencies. What are the output measures which best describe the activities and benefits of brokering services, in terms which both parties see meaningful? In most cases, the indicators with universal exchange properties are dollars, and their proxies, students. If a brokering agency can point to the influx of new clientele to a college, and roughly approximate their tuition dollars contribution, much of the case is made. One agency was able to demonstrate to a local college that the students they would refer to them would be a boost out of a deficit budget situation; for the first time in years. In a time of a shrinking college-age cohort, lower percentage of college-going after

high school, and straitened institutional finances, such a demonstration is assuredly convincing.

A third point should quickly be made here: When does the relationship become manipulative, merely a shuffling of student bodies and tuition assistance monies around to colleges in return for their acquiescent cooperation? Does a brokering agency take advantage of colleges' weakened financial status? Our feeling is that this is a cynical and short-sighted strategy. Such pressure politics cannot last; fellowship among regional colleges is too strong to permit one of their members to be so treated. The use of such unfair leverage tactics would soon result in a collective rejection of an opportunistic or manipulative brokering agency.

This is an unlikely occurrence, of course, but it does underscore the necessity for openness and directness in inter-institutional relationships. If close, personal ties between institutional and brokerage personnel can be established, if the appropriate timing and pacing of contacts can be achieved (by artistry only; no formulae here) and the expectations and anticipations of each party are mutually clear, then worthwhile and relatively trouble-free linkages will be promoted. Getting inside is important; often it is a matter of personal style, seat-of-pants savvy and plain honesty which makes the difference. No games and no surprises seem to be the soundest tack for both parties.

Part of this, as indicated above, requires that the brokering notion itself must be sold, not only one's own agency. This is a lobbying, image-building endeavor, in the best sense of those terms. The converse of this point is just as important, however, that the brokering idea or one's own agency must not be *over*-sold as the source of hordes of able new students. Likewise, one must guard against being perceived as threatening or competitive to existing institutions.

Finally, a new educational brokering service should not attempt to promote immediately any large-scale or extreme changes in institutional operating practices as they relate to adult learners. Any changes will take time, and often money—namely, the reallocation or reassignment of already restricted dollars to new areas of activity. Institutional changes are better approached on a case-by-case basis, with precedents gradually being set for adult learners, accumulating to a point where policy is easily changed.

B. Maintaining Relationships

In dealing with other institutions on a continuing basis, certain other eternal verities seem to emerge. Keeping information channels open and static-free and continuing one's efforts to maintain original personal contacts are among the essentials. Even though a broker may

have no clients currently at a particular institution, there *will* be some eventually. Heating up a relationship and an understanding grown cold requires time and effort better spent elsewhere. Advisory councils are valuable for keeping in touch, but only if they have *real* business to conduct, and do not waste members' time. Also, regular newsletters have helped.

As brokering agencies grow, they tend to gravitate toward a cluster of institutions which are most helpful to their purposes. One consequence of this is a gradual identification with certain power centers in the region. We find it advisable, although not easy, to check our own image of neutrality periodically. Whom are we seen to be in league with? Whose enemies are our friends? Whose pawn may we become? An agency may begin its life linked to a more powerful sister institution, or a series of consortium memberships. The degree of dependency on these should be monitored constantly.

Second, in terms of the credibility that our operations require, neutrality among various options for learning services is important. Sometimes this is difficult, as one's relationships with a larger system often carry unavoidable images. That is, one's associations with funding sources or the state education system carry certain baggage with them. Several of us are part of state college structures (CCV, HCCC), and hence, must share the images and the biases which clients or publics hold in regard to those larger systems. Similarly, some of us have been connected with large universities, at least for early start-up and funding conduit purposes, and have sought to dissociate ourselves as we have grown stronger.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HOW DO WE REACH OUR POTENTIAL CLIENTS?

In our discussions of external linkages in the preceding chapter, a distinction was made between establishing linkages with institutions for services and with the community for clients. The dynamics of the two are quite different; it is the latter which is the focus of this chapter.

The key issue in bringing in clientele was laid out by one of the participants at the Hoboken meeting:

"The task is to reach out, communicate your message and your programs to the people who need you, *when* they need you, in ways to which they can respond. Outreach is a question of bringing people in, and dealing with them in ways which will win their confidence."

——Barbara Bloom, RCEWP

I. The Problems We Face

A. How do we communicate our presence, our purposes and programs to regional constituencies? How do we let potential adult learners know who we are, what we do and what needs we serve?

B. What are the barriers we will face in trying to reach potential adult learners? What psychological and cultural factors are involved?

II. Our Reflections and Strategies

A. Getting Out the Message; Getting Out the Programs

Outreach to clients really operates at two levels: first, how information on brokering, the agency and its programs are communicated to potential clients, and, second, how the brokering services themselves are made more visible and accessible to clients.

1. **Information Delivery** is a multi-faceted process of communicating the brokering notion and an agency's capabilities to serve

adult learners. We all have tried many approaches. Our experience has yielded several general principles and guidelines for getting our message across.

First, the old saw that "the best advertisement is a satisfied customer" carries special import for brokering services. As our clientele increases, we find that we benefit more and more from word-of-mouth communication. We actively encourage clients to bring in a friend. The caution is to insure that information about the agency which is being dispersed by its friends is up-to-date and accurate. Contact is maintained with former clients who can be put on mailing lists for announcements of new services.

Second, it has been more effective for us to go after groups of clients than to try to attract one-at-a-time, off-the-street prospects. In view of the expenditures of time, effort, and money, the rifle approach seems to be best, at least in the agency's early stages. Recruitment campaigns can be brought to bear more effectively on comparatively homogeneous groups than on individuals with varied backgrounds and needs. Such avenues as veterans associations, geriatrics agencies, business groups or ethnic associations provide entrée to larger groups of potential clients.

To carry out special-focus campaigns, direct links must be established with other community agencies, businesses and institutions where people are found in clusters. A problem associated with this process can be called "getting past the chief." That is, gaining access to large groups of people within a union, a prison or a factory through a single institutional head or other contact. Many potential clients can be lost if the head man is not properly approached, or if he garbles the message to the rest of his group.

The danger with reliance on special-focus campaigns is that one's services and central identity may become linked with particular organizations or groups which make up initial client populations. This might prompt other potential clients to feel that "that outfit is not for me." A broad public image is important to help the brokering agency sustain operations, and promote links with other institutions for referral services. It takes time to build such an image, although general messages through mass media can help. Ultimately, special-focus campaigns should have priority, but they should be backed by general promotion of the agency in order to build a broader supportive climate of opinion.

Third, it is imperative that one's choice of media be creative and continually experimental. Ways must be found to determine what works. Some of us record on forms how each inquirer learns about us. We have found that more than one factor influences a person to contact a

broker for advisement. It is hard, of course, to distinguish between the influence of a newspaper advertisement, a bus placard, a radio announcement or a meeting addressed by a broker. It is thus necessary to use many media; they support each other if used simultaneously.

Free coverage in mass media can be obtained with a little ingenuity. Newspapers, particularly neighborhood "pennysavers" will run without charge announcements of scheduled events and periodic press releases on new services. They also will print human interest stories on clients — these have proven to attract more new people than advertisements. Fliers can be posted in local markets and pharmacies while leaflets can be left in laundromats, bars, community centers and other gathering places. The utilization of other organizations' communication links is an effective way to reach special groups. Those who may not read the newspapers will read about themselves and their friends in union newsletters, corporation house organs, library newsletters, club circulars or church bulletins.

Print media, while important when the brokerage is unknown, is poor in reaching segments of the population that tend to rely less on printed than on electronic sources of information. Radio and TV are good for free publicity in that they must carry public service announcements. Their interview programs are always in need of guests, and clients with counselors can convey very well the brokering functions. (One brokerage director even wangled his own weekly interview show on which he gives heavy exposure not only to brokering but to new educational programs that are responsive to adult needs.) Certain radio programs reach particular ethnic and age groups.

Still, even the traditional print and electronic media are not enough. Our evidence is impressive that stimulation of word-of-mouth channels will provide the most clients from population groups that have benefited least from traditional educational institutions. Direct contact with these potential clients is unfortunately limited. The best form of verbal communication seems to be to offer a specific service for potential clients themselves, and for those who are in a position to *refer* potential clients. (E.g., RLS has published a hand-out directory of regional educational resources.) Periodic information up-date mailings and staff visits are made to those who counsel adults in the community. We have held free workshops for corporation personnel and training directors, for those interested in new careers for women, for school and college guidance counselors and others. Information sessions on alternatives in work and learning have been held without charge at the facilities of social agencies, factories and clubs.

A few simple outreach principles emerged during the exchanges between brokerages:

- The message—as well as the medium—must be tailored to a particular audience with the aim of stimulating later personal inquiries.
- Language must be kept clear, simple, direct. Educational jargon or a missionary tone do not win friends.
- Style and communications must be balanced between the formal and the informal. The formality conveys seriousness of purpose, credibility; informality conveys approachability, ease of access, a human touch.
- Uniqueness of services offered must be stressed not so much in terms of innovativeness *per se*, but in terms of providing genuine answers to old problems, common problems and needs. Most potential clients are not consciously seeking a program called "innovative" or "non-traditional."

Finally, information about an agency can be spread by making the publicity function a conscious part of every agency activity. For example, the Regional Learning Service broadened its public image and gained many supporters as an off-shoot of its initial staff recruitment and selection process. People who were asked to nominate potential staff members were also given a detailed run-down on the new RLS operation. More importantly, many of the applicants were involved in extensive planning and group work related to designing RLS's function and programs as part of their selection process. Although only 24 of the 350 applicants were chosen to be Learning Consultants, all applicants felt they had made a contribution to the new organization, and became quite familiar with its purpose and programs. Thus, RLS gained many knowledgeable and supportive friends who still keep up to date on RLS fortunes. There are numerous other ways to gain community consultation; the point here is that the public's awareness has many entry points.

2. Program Delivery is discussed in Chapter Two as an aspect of delivery of services. Suffice it to say at this point that the dispersal of service delivery sites is a key consideration in bringing more clients in. Decentralized counseling or instructional centers not only heighten accessibility, they increase visibility and consequent word-of-mouth communication as well. Many clients are drawn in simply by exposure to our program operations; neighborhood brokering centers often serve to create their own demand. Their proximity in a familiar neighborhood setting makes them effective outreach units in that they make easier the first steps of re-entry to the world of learning.

In addition to various satellite centers, several brokers use itinerant teams or networks of mobile staff to deliver services at places of work, churches, libraries, YMCA/YWCA facilities, and even in homes and storefronts. (RLS operates a five-county network of highly space-free

learning consultants; HCCC has ten satellite centers as well as a mobile van; CCV has three separate sites dispersed through the state; RCEWP has a five college network and several local community sites.) We all have found that adequate physical facilities are available throughout the communities served without much—or often any—cost. Thus, we have been able to move, in our short histories, toward greater decentralization of services, particularly as a means to *attract* clients as well as a means to enable easy access to educational services.

B. Two Perplexing Barriers to Outreach

The area of outreach to clients is one where those of us without instructional programs have not had, frankly, the impacts we have desired. Our studies and our instincts tell us that there are many more adult learners out there whom we could benefit, many more than we have reached thus far. This may be related to the newness of the idea, but we feel there are still deeper problems here, with serious implications for the whole brokering function. It is more than a question of honing the P.R., marketing or advertising edge; the issue may devolve to more basic psychological or cultural factors.

Specifically, we are faced with two barriers: peoples' capacity to *hear* our message, and their ability to *respond* to our message. The first one is a matter of information processing skills, and to some degree may be resolvable. The second is almost a matter of social psychology or cultural norms, and may be very difficult to modify. It also bears the most serious implications for long-range future planning for brokerages.

1. Low Information Processing Skills. We have observed in our brokering experience what the psychologists have been writing for years, that decision-making and behavioral change first require the processing of information input, and that there are distinct skill levels of information processing ability.

In order to utilize information in making decisions, an individual must recognize that he needs information, know what questions to ask, know how to validate and integrate the responses to his questions, and order the information for the decision-making process. We have observed that many adults have very low information-processing skills; they get stalled at the first step. They do not seek out a brokering agency to meet their information needs. This is where our outreach efforts run into difficulty.

The psychologists also confirm our observation that persons with low levels of information-processing ability are likely to manifest certain traits or attitudes which make them difficult to reach; namely, fatalism, skepticism, and suspicion of others' motives. Most of us have experienced this "what-are-you-trying-to-tell-me-and-what's-in-it-for-you-anyway" reaction from clients. Thus, not only is our message not

getting across—there is not the recognition of need for it—but our intent for sending it is sometimes suspect. It becomes our function to help develop information skills, both for the process of our counseling and instruction, and to get people engaged in the first place.

2."Change Is for the Young." We sketch our final point briefly and simply so as to sidestep a polemic. We feel it bears serious consequences for brokering, and points up a major obstacle in client outreach.

The key feature of the brokering function is to provide the opportunity, the support and the resources for people to take charge of their own lives. We exist to enable people to make reasoned choices and to take responsibility for their own futures. But a great many people just do not live that way. They do not move through life by carefully planned decisions. They let life happen to them, almost randomly. Great numbers of adults are reluctant to set new goals—much less state the old ones—to weigh options, to set out on any but the most minor life-change campaigns. Yet promoting these kinds of activities is the very essence of the brokering function. We deal in a very unsettling commodity—self-determination. By the time they are adults, people are unused to such a notion, even resist it—"Change is for the young." Yet our prime mission is to facilitate change for adults.

In our outreach efforts, we try to highlight our uniqueness, the ways brokering agencies are different from the familiar and typical adult education programs. We do not have the *product* orientation of most institutions—the visible courses, majors, diplomas—but a *process* orientation, a set of means and methods for achieving certain ends. This may be what resounds most clearly in peoples' minds—"They say they're *not* going to tell me what do do!" And, "they want me to *pay* for that?"

People are not only reluctant to make life-changes, they also tend to be passive advice-absorbers. As long as they are being directed toward someone else's goals for them, they feel secure. This is the way many social agencies and educational institutions operate, counseling people toward specific activities to achieve certain kinds of goals. But for an individual to participate in establishing those goals, and to consider alternative routes to their attainment is much more an open field run, an uncertain process. It is understandably difficult to get people to actively seek—or respond to—programs for making life-changes that offer no concrete end-products.

We have had some successes, of course; people do respond to our efforts, but the process is a slow one. We will have to continue our outreach efforts with full understanding that the yields may be low for some time. The real measure of success for our brokering agencies will be the numbers and types of people who come to us of their own accord, not just how well we continue to receive outside funding.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HOW DO WE MAKE IT FINANCIALLY?

The issue of finances is one that gives us more than faint discomfort. Yet it is perhaps the most important single problem we face. Financial questions seem to divide themselves into start-up and long-term issues. They must be considered simultaneously but are distinctly different. Their consideration by brokering staffs is influenced by what may be a generic attitudinal feature of many of us attempting to create learner-centered rather than institution-centered services for adults. It was well stated in a report on the Montpelier meeting:

"The problem is a lack of understanding and appreciation of good fiscal management and responsibility. There is a basic distrust of money and a large assumption that having to deal with money corrupts and taints the positive human relationships we want to encourage. Historically, this has often been true. We've all looked at other bureaucratic organizations and said 'ours won't become that way.' However, it is possible to be fiscally responsible and sensitive, yet remain in touch with the human needs we are trying to meet. We won't survive if we don't learn to do this better."

——Anne Lynn, Community College of Vermont

I. The Problems We Face

A. Start-Up Funding

As new educational ventures, both in concept and in implementation, we have had to cultivate our own financial support from the start. Four particular sets of problems had to be dealt with as we attempted to plan and get our operations under way.

1. How do we identify potential sources of start-up funds who are sympathetic to adult learners and to the new brokering notion?
2. How do we keep afloat while doing the conceptual and political spade-work for a major program?
3. How can we avoid having our purposes and programs skewed,

either intentionally or unintentionally, by the sources of money?
4. How can we cost-estimate our activities in advance and later measure what we have accomplished for every dollar spent?

B. Long Term Funding

The requirements for financially securing the operating future of an agency contrast sharply with the start-up problems. The long-term challenge is to find individuals and institutions which are willing to pay for brokering services on a regular basis. Some of the questions we face are:

1. What part of our operations can be supported by individual user fees without excluding particular client groups?
2. What employers and institutions/agencies will buy brokering services for their employees, clients, inmates, patients and other clientele?
3. How might educational institutions, consortia or state systems find it in their interest to support brokering services?
4. How might state or local governments establish an annual budgetary line-item for brokering services to adults?
5. Are there federal or federal/state programs that brokering services could implement through annually-renewed grants or contracts?

II. Our Reflections and Strategies

A. Start-up Funding

"It was an act of faith to fund me—I had all the freedom and support I could possibly need from the Whitney Foundation in that first year. That is a method that really pays off. I could not have done it without really coming to know the human beings I was working with. It takes time to establish those relationships—particularly when the objective conditions of their lives are difficult, it takes longer to develop communication and trust. There were weeks and weeks of three-hour meetings to develop some trust and let the idea evolve. There are no quick results to show funders."

—— Suzanne Lipsky, WINNERS

Most of us were supported by small planning grants for a gestation period of six to twelve months which enabled us to lay a groundwork of purpose, clientele and community contacts. Foundations played a major role as pump-primers in this phase for we were able to think, talk and travel to formulate our mission with those we aimed to benefit; e.g., Joseph O'Neill in New Jersey (Exxon Foundation), Stephen Bailey and Francis Macy in Central New York (Ford Foundation), Suzanne Lipsky and a study group of inner-city women in Boston (John Jay

Whitney Foundation). State governments and university systems also have sponsored think-tank periods; e.g., for Peter Smith (Vermont) and Lawrence Dennis (Massachusetts). Several state supported feasibility studies of brokering have been made; e.g., Norman Kurland (New York), Albert Swinerton (Wisconsin), and Richard E. Peterson (California). Finally, the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education has enabled several brokers to start from ground zero; e.g., Fred Pinkham (Connecticut), Michael Kelly (Pennsylvania), and Paul Spell (Alabama). Those who lacked planning support and pushed right into hiring and counseling regret the rush. As one of the project directors noted,

"I could have benefited greatly from more planning time. There was not time or money to work it all out with the people in other institutions before hiring was done. Once counselors were hired we were committed to action."

Important during the planning period are contacts with prospective funders and subsequent preparation of proposals for the development and demonstration phases. Directories list those foundations which are interested in education and adults. They often favor programs in their own states or regions. A simple ten-page think-piece on the basic notion and need for a new service can be mailed widely to private foundations' executives with personal letters requesting individual meetings. They naturally want to size up in person the people they are betting on. Demographic and other data analyses are not important at this point but evidence of strong local connections and support are looked for. If asked directly in person, funders generally will spell out what they would like to see in a full-blown proposal. They also will indicate, if pressed, whether they will consider funding for more than a year.

Foundations usually can be more flexible in their expectations than can governmental agencies, but the latter usually have higher potential for long-term funding. Several of us are so supported at the state level. State education departments have funds from the federal vocational and adult education appropriations which can be used on developmental projects in adult counseling and information services. State departments of labor and mental health also have broad mandates which can include support for brokering. Michael Kelly in Pennsylvania has pooled funds from several state and local agencies to support adult counseling in space contributed by a number of public agencies including libraries and employment security offices. He noted, **"When I arrived, I had the impression that nobody [in Harrisburg] ever crossed the street before from the Department of Education to talk to the Department of Labor. The brokering**

agency gives us the objectivity to cross many streets. I talk not only about what we can do for their clientele, but also for their own staff members."

Federal agencies to approach for developmental funding include not only the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education in HEW but also the educational opportunity and career education programs in the U.S. Office of Education and the National Institute of Education. A first step is to write for guidelines and deadlines on their competitive grant programs (before January) and for their policy on considering unsolicited proposals. Other federal agencies to be explored include the Labor Department, National Institute of Mental Health and National Science Foundation. In all cases, it pays to discover the prospects for multi-year funding.

From our experience it appears that a new program, especially a new institution mounting new brokering functions, needs at least three years to test the value and feasibility of its services. We believe it is short-sighted for private and public funders of developmental brokering projects to provide funds for only one year at a time after an initial planning grant. Those of us on a one-year tether have known difficulty in hiring quality staff for short terms and have had to cope with disconcerting staff insecurity over the prospects of re-funding. Brokering agencies seek and attract risk-takers who know that no sinecure is offered, but even the most self-confident and well-connected staff member worries about finding other work as the June 30 funding cut-off date approaches.

Financial insecurity for an entire staff during the demonstration phase pressures the program director to divert major portions of time and attention from the struggling new program. Proposals must be researched and written for a number of funders to avoid dependence on only one source of money—an inherently precarious strategy. Policies and priorities can change rapidly and loyal backers in funding agencies can lose or change jobs, leaving a developing broker with an empty-bag feeling. Joseph O'Neill observes that he spent almost all of his time in one six-month period on proposals. The results are dramatically visible at the Hudson Community College Commission which has enjoyed several types of federal, state and private funding.

B. Long-Term Funding

The transition from soft to hard funding, from developmental grants to an annual financial base, ought to be under way well before start-up grants are exhausted. We believe that three types of income make up the soundest long-term financial base: 1) fees from individuals served; 2) revenue from contracts with institutions; and 3) annual payments

from state and/or local budgets. The only other real alternative for a broker who wishes to continue providing services, in the absence of these three types of income, is to change the staffing, organizational setting or other basic aspect of the operation.

1. Revenue from Individuals. Individual adult learners or would-be learners are the focus of brokering services. They benefit the most so they might logically bear the heaviest burden of counseling costs. We have experimented with diverse client fee structures and conclude that people will not or cannot pay enough for educational counseling to cover its costs. WINNERS has never charged a fee, but both the Capital Higher Education Service and the Regional Learning Service have experimented with several different fee structures.

CHES established a fee of $20 per counseling session but frequently waived it by using a fund for client aid donated by a Hartford community development organization. The $20 counseling fee was finally dropped and replaced by a registration fee of $10.

RLS has tested the market by using three different fee structures. For the first half year, to develop a clientele, it charged an introductory fee of $30.00 ($20.00 for persons with no high school diploma) for four months of unlimited counseling. Many clients said it was a bargain. The fee was then raised to $50.00 ($25.00 for those without diplomas) for three months to see if people would pay the $5.00 per hour salary of learning consultants for an average of ten hours of counseling. Client intake dropped sharply. Finally, in January 1975, the three month fee was placed at $15.00 for all clients regardless of educational level. The increase of clients was sudden and sustained; this cannot be explained entirely by stepped-up media coverage and personal referrals by a growing clientele. RLS decided against a scale of fees based on income in order to avoid client relationships tainted by financial investigation, manipulation and suspicion which characterizes some social agencies. RLS also rejected the notion of charging per counseling session or specific service in order to avoid discouraging full use of the brokering services during a demonstration period.

We also have discovered that while people will not pay the full cost of counseling, they will pay more than the cost of instructional programs. Consequently, counseling services have been packaged by some of us into courses and workshops (CHES and RLS); instructors have been hired for one course at a time by other brokers to provide academic and vocational courses directly to clients in lieu of referring them to other educational institutions (CCV and HCCC).

At the Community College of Vermont, when tuition revenues were required by the State, Peter Smith and his colleagues calculated that the administrative costs of billing, collecting and accounting for

student tuition fees would push up precipitously the amount of tuition that would have to be charged. Students were therefore told what the cost of courses would be and they were invited to contribute this amount. To simplify bookkeeping, each student was given a bank deposit form and asked to make payments not to college staff but directly into a college bank account. The amount raised in this manner came very close to the sum required by the central office of the State College System. After several years of rapidly growing enrollment, the central office demanded an increased income from CCV. To ensure this revenue, CCV has reluctantly replaced the voluntary tuition with a required tuition and the concomitant bureaucratic paraphernalia. In the meantime, however, the College had learned that it was the lower income indigenous Vermonters who generally paid the full tuition while the in-migrants fleeing urban and suburban America tended to ride the educational rails without buying a ticket.

2. **Revenue from Institutions.** Some of us have had some success, after time consuming promotional efforts, in persuading business, government and institutional executives to contract and pay for our brokering services. Workshops and individual counseling are provided to their employees or constituencies at a per capita cost above our normal fees. The rationale is that our government and foundation sponsors are willing to subsidize the cost of services to individuals, expecially the disadvantaged, but not to businesses, agencies and institutions with budgets capable of covering actual counseling costs as well as the cost of information and administrative support services.

Annual contracts that are renewable are most desirable but most have been short-term arrangements including small numbers of clients and small amounts of money. As referrals by brokers to higher educational institutions increase, it may become appropriate and politically feasible to establish an annual retainer fee for brokering services from consortium or area colleges in which clients enroll. To preserve the broker's neutrality, the payment should be the same for all institutions and independent of the number of clients who contribute to any college's FTE figures.

3. **On-Going Support from Federal Programs.** While there are a number of development programs administered directly by the federal government, from which we all have benefited, there are only a few apparent possibilities for sustained annual federal support to brokering services past the developmental stage. We can identify leads worth pursuing.

Under the Higher Education Act, HEW supports the establishment and operation of Educational Opportunity Centers to provide brokering services to "educationally disadvantaged persons." Ten grants were

made throughout the country for fiscal year 1974 and generally continued in the following year to the same projects. Unless USOE policies change, it will continue to be difficult to break into this club but will be rewarding for years to the successful.

The Office of Education annually makes direct grants under the Vocational Education Act for a variety of purposes including support of demonstration and research concerning "comprehensive systems of guidance, counseling, placement, and follow-through services." These are essentially brokerage functions, and brokering obviously should have a role to play in any effort to coordinate services on the local level.

Other programs of the Office of Education in vocational education and career education are concerned with the type of clients we have been attending to with career as well as educational guidance, including youths in economically depressed areas and "handicapped, minority, low income or female youths." But these are "pilot" or demonstration programs that are funded for one year with little chance for renewals beyond another two years.

It is theoretically possible to move from one federal demonstration program to another, and many of our entrepreneurial types try to do so. But parlaying short-term federal programs is a precarious way to live which requires constant grantsmanship on different fronts. This detracts, we feel, from developing a coherent set of brokering services.

4. On-Going Support from State Programs. State budgetary support, from either federal or state appropriations, appears to be the most promising long-term underpinning for brokering programs. Such support usually can be negotiated only by frequent visits to the state capital.

State bureaus for vocational or occupational education are handsomely and consistently funded by federal funds. These can be used by the state not only for instruction but also for "vocational guidance and counseling" in or out of schools and colleges including for "people who have completed or left high school." A special target group are "young workers released from their jobs on a part-time basis for the purpose of increasing their educational attainment." While most of these funds are expended through secondary institutions, fifteen percent do go toward "postsecondary programs." State funding is usually annual and reliable under the Vocational Education Act.

The federal government requires that fifteen percent of the funds it provides to states in support of adult education under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) be spent for training and for special projects. Educational brokering services concerned with adult learning could well qualify as special projects designed to promote "comprehensive or coordinated approaches to the problems of persons

with educational deficiencies."

The State offices charged with administering sections of Title I of the Higher Education Act concerned with adult and continuing education have been funding surveys of continuing education needs and resources. Means to disseminate information on study opportunities are also legitimate activities for these federal funds. Brokering services must be associated with a degree-granting institution to be eligible for grants under this annual program.

Far preferable to the programs described which require annual applications to state agencies, are regular state budget items for educational brokering. Several states have acted to support brokering services. In Massachusetts, the human services budget includes dollars to match federal funding of educational opportunity centers offering brokering services in six locations. The State of Wisconsin, through the University of Wisconsin Extension Division, supports community-based educational counseling centers in seventeen counties and Milwaukee. In Rhode Island, the State Education Department and Office of Manpower Affairs financed the Career Counseling Service for a transitional year at the end of federal developmental funding. The Pennsylvania legislature in 1975-76 was considering a bill which would appropriate over one million dollars annually to operate Adult Education and Career Opportunity Centers "to provide comprehensive testing, education and career counseling, appropriate education and career referrals to expand opportunities for adults." (Senate Bill No. 926, 1975).

The transition from developmental to operational funding is best attempted in measured stages rather than completely from one financial year to the next. In Washington State, for example, the Okanogan County Education Service moved in one year from 90 percent federal funding to 61 percent federal and 39 percent local.

It is the brokering services in state-supported college systems that in the mid-seventies were making the transition most gracefully. The ability of free-standing brokering agencies to achieve long-term financial viability is yet to be proven. State support seems necessary.

C. *The Skewing of Purposes*

The skewing of one's purposes through the influence of outside monies, whether it is intentional or not, is a very real problem. Taking money from *any* source has got to have some impacts. The key, of course, is "translating your purposes into *their* purposes." And the catch to that is really knowing your own purposes clearly enough, and knowing the mission of the funding agencies. The earlier point about clarity of purpose and feeling of central identity is salient here, as is the point about doing one's homework on other organizations. Not only their agendas,

needs, anxieties, and programs should be looked into, but also the ways that they themselves are funded. If it is a state agency, are they on a line-item or a special project budget? How can the legislature intervene? If it is an educational system, are they on a formula budget? A head-count or FTE basis? Is PPBS being utilized? If it is a federal agency, are they fully funded? Do they dispense only seed money? Recurring funds? Pork barrel? If it is a foundation, is their parent organization associated with venture capital?

Second, the question of value judgments enters in. "Just how much is it worth to us to take this money for this program support?" Staff soon see their values and ideals structures translated into dollar terms, and must face their personal sense of priorities in terms of the agency's future. The sense for making reasonable compromise and trade-offs is something developed over time.

Some of this may be resolved if staff are directly involved in budget-building and financial decision-making. People often learn to see the budget as less a mysterious and faintly noisome document and more as an explicit expression of plans, priorities and values. Learning where the dollars come from before they hit the ledger book pages and where they go afterward helps to de-mystify the financial process.

D. Financial Accountability

"But if we mean to be responsible for our work and responsible for funds entrusted to us, we are obliged to specify what we are trying to do, including how and when, and then we must see that our performance is reviewed impartially and often enough to spot what we are doing poorly and improve it if we can. Also, we must use such reviews to make sure that full benefits are produced and parlayed from programs that we are learning to do *well*."

——Donald Barnes, Capital Higher Education Service

Our final point about making it financially concerns accounting for monies received, and improving one's chances for getting more, once past the developmental stages. The monitoring of internal funds expenditure is not to check whose hand is in the till (most of us don't have enough to bother) but to establish links between costs and outcomes. Good internal auditing points to what is being spent, what the payoffs are, how to reallocate monies for better use. It helps in comparing new ideas with existing programs. It also gives funding sources an accounting of how their grants are being spent; for a state-supported agency, this capability is imperative, considering the nature of legislatures' budget officers.

More important than the fiscal responsibility issue, however, is the ability of an agency to describe itself in costs and benefits terms. Most

of us soon will face the drying up of start-up funds; we will have to move to new bases of support. In order to make our case before a business firm for contracted services, we are going to have to know how much our various activities cost, and how much we will have to charge for services. We also will have to demonstrate to state agencies or local legislative bodies the effectiveness of dollars spent if we are to receive tax-generated appropriations.

To go from soft developmental funding to hard recurrent support we will have to make a cost-effectiveness case, to prove that we are worth the gamble. In deriving a cost-benefit ratio, costs are always easier to label than benefits, especially in an eleemosynary institution. The matter of outcomes measures is considered in the next chapter, "How Do We Appraise Our Efforts?"

CHAPTER NINE

HOW DO WE APPRAISE OUR EFFORTS?

The preceding chapters describe brokering as a new attitude, a new way to open educational opportunities to adults, enabling them to secure personal and vocational goals. We embody a group of vigorous people, unconventional organizations and varieties of services. We have been supported well, at least in our developmental phases, by the funds and the confidence of a number of agencies.

How, we may now ask, do we appraise what we are doing? How do we justify our continuation as agencies? The obvious answer is that we must be able to demonstrate that we have had positive impacts. And, in order to do this, we come up against the issue of evaluation: how do we *measure* and *describe* our impacts? This final chapter sketches the ideology, the methodology and some of the products of our efforts at evaluating impacts.

I. The Problems We Face

A. What kinds of outcomes are most important to us? For whom should impacts studies be made? What questions should we be asking ourselves?

B. How do we go about evaluating our impacts? What are the criteria, the indicators relevant to brokering activities? How do we collect data and proceed with evaluation in ways harmonious with our values, our staffs and our focus on clients?

C. Just what effects have we had, specifically, on individuals and on institutions? Have we, in fact, changed anything? What are the results of our first attempts at self-appraisal?

II. Our Reflections and Strategies

A. Evaluation for Whom?

Before designing our data collection and analysis systems, we have tried to identify the priority consumers of our evaluation results. Our

mission and services are accountable first and foremost to the needs of learners. Our evaluation efforts must be similarly guided. We seek first to provide evaluation which is most useful to clients (e.g., the positive payoffs, the effects of working with a broker or instructional agency). As a second priority, we seek to provide evaluative feedback to staff regarding their impacts (role effectiveness, client satisfaction). We also seek to provide process evaluation for management purposes (program operations, costs of services). Finally, we pursue evaluation for the needs of outside agencies, to account for funds received in order to justify and support further funding requests, and to demonstrate effectiveness from the perspectives of other institutions and agencies.

All four of these are highly important; none can be given short shrift. Yet, by starting with client and internal needs rather than the demands of outside agencies, we can resist having our data collection and analysis skewed by others' purposes and needs.

Assuredly, many of the same kinds of data and indicators are useful to both individual clients and other agencies as well. Thus, we may do well to collect data on "Credit Hours Transferred to Baccalaureate Institutions," or "Job Changes After Life-Planning/Counseling Contracts." These are useful ways to describe our activities to other agencies, but more importantly, they answer the leading questions justifiably asked by clients as they consider our brokering services.

As indicated in Chapter Eight, most funders will respect and work with an agency that knows what it wants to do and how to make its case. This is true in terms of specifying one's outcomes, too. However, the indicators used by brokers frequently must be translated into Third Agency evaluation formulae and conventions. As a case in point, the agencies which offer instruction (e.g., Community College of Vermont and Hudson Community College Commission) express their learning outcomes in terms of competencies or capabilities relative to prior or current learning, yet they must be able to translate these to course or credit hour equivalencies. That is, they report to state education officials their registrations in terms of credit hours, even though students do not typically view their work in terms of amassing credits. This is done by working out credit hour equivalencies within a series of predetermined competency areas.

B. Evaluation Approaches and Difficulties

In conducting evaluation and impact studies, we have discovered that several points of view typically emerge. One of these attitudes, in its extreme form, depicts evaluation as intrusive or counter-productive — the notion that "to measure is to mangle." A second point of view is more laissez-faire; evaluation is seen as essentially superfluous, and should be done on an *ad hoc* or informal basis, if at all — the extreme

form being "let's just feel the vibes to tell where we're at." At a third extreme is the highly-structured, overdisciplined approach that attempts to monitor any exogenous variable that moves. This point of view sees evaluation as a controlled inquiry based on hard proof and documentation — the notion that truth and goodness can be metered in accretions of .005 levels of certainty. These descriptions are caricatures, certainly, and none of us has succumbed to such extremes, yet they are tendencies we do need to balance out as we plan our evaluation strategies.

In our experience, the evaluation process in brokerages tends to be on-going and informal, rather than periodic and structured. We have built into our operations feedback systems quite unlike the conventional organizations' routine habit of The Annual Report. Because our agencies are new, and because communication and information flow is open, evaluations occur almost constantly. Only infrequently do we mount large scale studies; e.g., for major progress reports or for accreditation visits. Brokerage staffs tend to be wary of evaluations "for paperwork's sake." However, they are eager for feedback on outcomes and mechanisms for self-evaluation, self-correction.

The best resolution of approaches to evaluation, we find, is based on the notion of "different strokes for different folks." The multiple functions, activities and outcomes of brokering agencies require a wide variety of perspectives and criteria for evaluation. We need to recognize and legitimate a variety of ways of assessing our impacts, in both quantitative and qualitative terms. (See "Criteria and Indicators" below.)

1. **Data Collection** is hampered in some instances by both staff and clients, for attitudinal and logistical reasons. Staff generally are averse to poking and prodding clients for information not directly related to the client's problem at hand (e.g., income levels, parents' education, length of residence). Counselors often see little intrinsic value or direct pay-off to collecting client data, particularly when their contact time may be limited, or when asking such questions may be distracting to a counseling or instructional relationship. Finally, clients are either wary of data-collection — from past experiences with personally meaningless survey questionnaires — or they inadvertantly bias the information they give — many answer in a socially-acceptable, "yea-saying" manner, or in terms of what they think we want to hear. Many clients feel so positively about their counseling experiences that a halo effect creeps in; they generalize an undifferentiated good feeling toward all aspects of the program.

2. **Choosing Performance Indicators** is the primary problem in data-collection. It is hard to attach any measurable index to broker-

ing's multi-faceted activities. One cannot have performance criteria or effective evaluation based on fuzzy humanistic goals. Second, it is difficult to keep performance indicators up to date with changes in agency activities while at the same time maintaining on-going data bases with useful long-term comparability. We need to develop client profiles and change-over-time indicators if we are truly to demonstrate impacts, yet criteria for long-term effects must be established well before the fact.

Third, our impacts are often difficult to isolate, for clients are influenced by other agencies and institutions as well. Changes induced by our agencies and by Third Agencies cannot be easily teased apart. Finally, we see a need to guard against overstressing the "hard proof" performance indicators. The very nature of brokering services is not one which produces simple, quick, or obvious effects. Such qualitative changes as "taking control over one's life direction," or even a simple job change, do not happen overnight. Individualized and long-term studies are more meaningful to us; our broader publics and funders must be made to see that the conventional measures — FTE counts, test scores — are inappropriate and that different kinds of criteria must be used. We also realize, with some chagrin, that longitudinal and follow-up studies and non-quantitative studies require time, money and effort needed for other purposes. These constraints and conundrums make this aspect of our self-appraisals one of the most problematic.

"As a counseling and influencing agency, assessing the success or failure of CHES becomes extremely difficult. Since CHES offers no credit or academic instruction, its effectiveness in pursuit of its objectives must be observed in the appropriateness of the decisions made by its clients and in the changes in area institutions. Our success depends in large part upon the quality of other agencies' programs."

——1974 Progress Report, Capital Higher Education Service

C. *Criteria and Indicators*

How, then, do we describe our impacts on individuals? What indicators best convey to both prospective clients and to outside agencies the nature of our effects? The following are indicators and criteria which one or more of the brokerages have used in evaluation reports or self-studies.

1. **Basic Data:** to convey the scope of our activities and the kinds of clientele we serve, most of us collect the conventional nose-count kinds of data. Numbers served — over time, in what activities (counseling, assessment, instruction), for what duration. We make the typical

breakdowns by age, sex, race, ethnic and income sub-groups, and occupational areas.

Such data are useful for prospective clients' initial probes about what to anticipate, and for other agencies' needs for some familiar statistics to fondle. As with all quantitative descriptors, the question arises as to the *significance* of such numbers. The total number of clients may be far less important than the number of clients per kind of service, over what periods of time. Also, the typical sub-groups of "kinds of clients" may be far less important than the category of "clients with greatest needs": those previously untouched — or unreachable — by counseling and educational services.

Basic demographic data are of some use to clients, a little more use to agency staff and managers, and of most use — or most attractiveness — to outside funding, legislative and educational agencies. And, as we suggest, their meaning is a relative matter.

2. Cost Data: In addition to simple revenue and expenditure data, we have found it useful to develop cost data related to the various aspects of our activities. This is particularly important in the early developmental periods when few clients are yet involved, and the costs per client naturally loom large. Several of us have designed activities report forms to indicate breakdowns of time spent directly with a client — one-to-one — or working on their behalf — phone work and leg-work — as well as time spent on agency development — materials, outside contacts, information gathering — so that our differential costs can be more reasonably assayed.

Such cost data are important for internal agency controls on resource allocation/consumption, and for potential long-term funders.

3. Qualitative Data: to answer the question of "what has happened?", we also utilize performance indicators which are qualitative in nature. These indicators are defined in terms of the core brokering functions of information-giving, referral, counseling, assessment and advocacy. Some samples of the kinds of indicators and criteria used include:

a. Information and Referrals: Utility and Continuity
   - Client satisfaction with the range and the diversity and ultimate usefulness of information resources and specific referral arrangements.
   - Willingness of referral agencies to continue to interact with the agency to receive additional referrals.

b. Counseling: Decisions Made
   - Clients' abilities to set life goals, undertake action on own behalf, change directions.

— Clients taking specific actions such as career shifts, job changes, deciding to enter — or not to enter — postsecondary education or training programs, resolving personal situations, making locale changes.
— Clients achieving re-entry to the world of work, or receiving salary upgrading, after a counseling or instructional contract.

c. Assessment: Validity
— Credits actually earned for prior learning assessed by agency: examinations passed and credits received after diagnostic assessments or learning contracts made by a brokerage; e.g., CLEP, Advanced Placement, GED, External High School and External College Degrees.

d. Advocacy: Effect of Intervention
— Clients placed in established institutions through new programs or exceptions to regulations.
— Recognition, crediting of individuals' prior life-experience or agencies' remedial tutoring.
— Institutional changes, new programs, procedures, policies for adult learners resulting from brokerage efforts.

e. Impacts of Instructional Services (e.g., CCV, HCCC)
— Credits amassed, degrees earned, competencies attained through brokerage, teaching agency.
— Re-enrollments, continuation of course work (stop-out versus drop-out ratio).
— Courses taken per student, range of courses offered or content covered; attainment of learning *how* to learn in addition to *what*; e.g., through further independent study, self-paced learning, writing learning contracts.
— Acceptance of credits, degrees, and validated prior learning at established transfer institutions.
— Success of graduates at transfer institutions; e.g., grade point average, scholarships, bachelors/graduate degree completion.

In addition to these indicators, an agency's impacts can be judged in terms of the marketplace; i.e., value and credibility as seen by the consumers of brokering agencies' products — businesses, schools and agencies:

- Business and industry job offers for graduates, requests for service to own populations; requests for intern/student trainee placements.

- Educational institutions' transfer practices.
- Accreditation or approval by education departments, Veterans Administration, federal student aid programs, vocational rehabilitation, welfare agencies.

Again, these indicators are not measures of *how* we do our job, but *what* we do for clients. Information in such areas enables us to answer clients' questions about why they should become involved in our programs, how they are most likely to benefit.

D. The Evidences of Impacts: Selected Examples

1. Individual Clients: Many of the significant changes in individuals' lives which have occurred due to the influence of a brokering agency are not quantifiable. To us, the more substantial evidences of change come from clients themselves; their own words and histories are far more telling than descriptive statistics. Like the vignettes in Chapter One, the following are not presented as anything like a systematic evaluation exercise. We are not yet old enough for such efforts. Rather, these examples are presented as the kinds of situations we have encountered which encourage us all to keep doing what we are doing.

"Some people just need to be pointed in the right direction, like aiming a cannon, and then you just get out of their way! Ms. J. is a case like that. Married at 15, sole parent and support for two children, from the Puerto Rican barrio. But she's no down and outer. She's got a good job in employee relations, and is climbing fast. She wants to get a Bus Ad degree, with a health management emphasis.

She came to CHES for help in selecting the right college program. She works full time, so we narrowed down to the 'college without walls' programs. We saw she had considerable breadth, by life experience, in health sciences, social sciences and the arts. We also diagnosed some deficiencies in the areas of theoretical concepts in natural and social sciences. Ms. J. seemed eager to get going on the right academic plan, and also to include guided practice in the application of administrative skills.

We looked at a number of 'without walls' programs, and found one that had particularly good procedures for individualizing a student's curriculum. Ms. J. has contacted this program and has also attended a 'learning support group' of adults involved in the program. She's all ready to dig right in; I know she'll do as well there as she's been doing on her job."

——Program Advisor, Capital Higher Education Service

Others among our clients require a good deal of help with self-

examination and construction of life plans. Not only do brokerages need to provide information, assessment, and diverse kinds of referrals, they also must supply important encouragement and support:

"John had drifted into his job, was bored and discontented with it. He came to RLS for information on how to make a job change. After several initial meetings, we came to decide that some interest and aptitude testing might help. From the Kuder, the Self-Directed Search and the Hall Occupational Inventory, it was apparent that mechanical, out-of-doors and concrete aspects of a job would be good for John. We looked through Forestry School, Ag and Tech School, and building trades curricula. John also studied the Occupational Handbook.

After a number of sessions, he decided to really look into Tool and Die Making, so I put him in touch with a T&D Master Model Maker — a previous RLS client — who offered to work with John with his own tools at home. Since apprenticeships are tough to get, this was great. John is taking a Machine Trades Course at the Community College, and really seems to be on his way. I know he's out of his rut, and is getting some good experience and learning."

——Learning Consultant, Regional Learning Service

"When I first decided to return to college I had many fears, anxieties, hopes, expectations. It was a giant step for a woman whose role had been that of wife, mother and homemaker. Although my family was most supportive, they could not go with me to 'The Big University' filled with energetic young minds. RCEWP enabled me to be with other women who shared the same experiences. I left their counseling sessions with the firm conviction that I, too, could finish my education."

——Client, age 47, RCEWP

"I called RCEWP to find opportunities for a grandmother out of school for 40 years to satisfy a thirst for knowledge. We talked a long time, and that counselor made me feel helpful, youthful and intelligent. I'm really excited about the prospects of getting back into learning."

——Client, age 61, RCEWP

The positive encouragement through counseling and support is augmented many times by gaining credit for a client's prior life-experience, through an advocacy action:

'G., in his fifties, recently left a successful business career to

earn an A.A. degree for a new career in art. With the guidance and support of his Program Advisor at CHES, G. has gained 36 credits by CLEP exams, and has gotten high grades on all of his courses. His Program Advisor is helping G. to secure 40 more credits for his experiential learning through art hobbies and museum volunteer work. G.'s target is a B.A. by June 1976, including one and a half years of full time study, to ready himself for graduate school."

——Program Advisor, Capital Higher Education Service

Ironically, not all of our client contacts result in a return to formal education. If it is in clients' better interests *not* to feel compelled to go to college, we help them clarify their plans and positions for *not* going as well:

"Jim, in his early twenties, came to RLS seeking advice on how to finish his Business degree without giving up his well-paying factory job. I suggested that he talk to College X to see how many hours of his past work could be transferred. Also, I reviewed the Regent's External Degree in Business with him. He felt that the independent learning necessary for the Regents External Degree was more than he could handle. In considering Empire State, he felt that he wanted more structure than ESC afforded its students. After a counselor at College X told him he could not transfer all of his previous work, he began to feel dismay about his educational planning.

This hesitation about continuing his degree plans led to further discussions with me in which we utilized RLS's 'Career Questions'. These self-assessments of career needs — salary, status, colleagues, activities, training — were very exciting revelations to Jim. He wrote out lengthy answers, as a kind of memo to himself about his values in this point in time. At the end of our counseling contract, Jim decided not to pursue a B.A. at this time, but to cross the blue-collar to white-collar line at his factory, and get into office work."

——Learning Consultant, Regional Learning Service

And, sometimes our activities serve to make a closed loop; not infrequently former clients become brokerage staff members:

"Rose was facing an uncertain future when she came to us. Her young husband had been struck with progressive blindness which would soon make her the sole support of their four children. She had completed a year of college, but had no idea of what she wanted to — or could — do for a living. She had

aptitudes for teaching, but was so alienated by past school experiences that she couldn't visualize herself in a classroom. She did take part, however, in a group research project on adult learning at the Omak Center, and worked with great enthusiasm and effectiveness.

We arranged for her to be an instructor's aide at the Community College while she finished her AA. Since there were no senior colleges nearby, we then helped her to gain admission to an experimental college with an off-campus intern program, and agreed to sponsor her internship. Her success with aiding adult learners, coupled with career counseling with us, brought her plans into focus. She decided to design her own study program to equip her to become an adult education specialist, assisting adults to make the transition from private life to college.

We are helping her prepare her life-experience resumé for the external B.A. degree program. We see that she will be a successful paraprofessional in the adult education field, and that her family responsibilities and future seem far more secure."

—— Staff Director, Okanogan County Educational Services

2. **Institutional Changes.** In addition to direct changes experienced by individual clients, we have seen our efforts causing changes within institutions — educational, social, legislative — as well.

All of the brokering agencies have engaged in general consciousness-raising efforts in their respective regions to make institutions more aware of the needs of adult learners, the possibilities and opportunities they might afford adult learners — as well as the barriers they may unknowingly create — and the benefits they may gain for themselves in serving adult learners. Consortium interactions, councils, regional workshops and advisory board linkages have helped to broaden the general awareness and openness to adult learning needs.

A number of specific institutional impacts which ultimately serve to further our clients' interests include the following:

a. At the institutional level, new programs and new practices:
   - HCCC aided in establishment of a "college within a college" at nearby Stevens Institute of Technology. Special courses and programs for adults and an Associate degree in Electronics were planned by Stevens faculty, and utilized Stevens labs and classrooms, for work toward HCCC degrees.
   - HCCC developed three new Associate degree programs for adult learners at Jersey City State College, and effected significant changes in existing Associate degrees, courses and scheduling for adults at St. Peters College.
   - HCCC developed special contracts with the Jersey City

Medical Center for thirty of its students in inhalation therapy, and with the New Jersey Medical and Dental Center for students in dental hygiene, thus opening professional education to adult and part-time learners.

- CHES helped establish a special counseling department for adult learners at a local large private university, and a career counseling center for adult women at a private two-year women's college.
- New staff positions were created within a number of institutions in Philadelphia for brokering and counsel under the guidance and coordination of RCEWP.
- OCES Omak staff pressed for and obtained Comprehensive Employment Training Act support for a Licensed Practical Nursing program, the first ever in the county.
- HCCC gained recognition, for transfer purposes, of students' credits and degrees earned through CLEP, Advanced Placement tests and their own tutoring efforts.
- RLS promoted recognition of credit-by-examination in central New York collegiate institutions by means of a survey of policies, workshops on policy changes, and publicity on experience assessment techniques. LeMoyne College (Syracuse) and others set up institutional and departmental policy on credit-by-examination for adults. A directory of resources was established for institutional cross-referrals.
- The Community College of Vermont effected the recognition and acceptance by other Vermont State institutions of non-traditional credentials, degrees by contract, credit by exam, and credit for prior learning.
- CHES helped develop programs at Manchester Community College for assessing and crediting prior learning portfolios. The MCC Director for Non-Traditional Learning -- a former CHES staffer -- served to coordinate credit evaluations and grants with individuals and departments.
- CHES worked with Eastern Connecticut State College in validating experiential learning for credit. Over one year, CHES clients have received a total of 300 prior-learning credit hours validated by CHES for ECSC, and up to 2-1/2 years of credit have been awarded by ECSC to a CHES client.
- RLS staff headed the development of the first and only external high school diploma in the United States, a degree based on competencies and performance testing.

b. With businesses and industry:
   - Workshops held in the Hartford area by CHES encouraged business firms to include in their educational reimbursement plans financial support for brokering counseling activities as well as instruction.
   - RLS developed a series of workshops for General Electric branch at Syracuse for unemployed engineers and staff to make transitions to new employment. G.E. now conducts such workshops on their own, modeled after RLS.

c. Through other social agencies and organizations:
   - RLS conducted program planning and training of librarians to become educational advisors for adult independent learners in the library system in New York City and Onondaga County.
   - Through its consortium task force, RLS pushed broad public promotion of the identification and development of educational programs tailored to adult learners' needs.
   - Efforts by OCES Omak staff led to the establishment of study programs in all ten communities in the county with populations over 400, including the Colville Indian Reservation.
   - OCES programs have tied together a number of diverse and disconnected community/social agencies such as the Community Action Council (OEO), Colville Confederated Tribes, the First Baptist Church of Okanogan, the County Alcohol Problems Agency, Seattle First National Bank, the U.S. Forest Service, county and city law enforcement agencies, the Omak Chamber of Commerce, nine school districts and the Northwest Regional Library.

d. At the State Legislature and stage agency level:
   - Efforts by a Hudson Community College Commission task force led to a New Jersey legislative bill and later statute to allow the establishment of a "degree granting institution which would utilize the services of other colleges," at a time of a statewide freeze on expanding higher education operations.
   - The Adult Counseling Program, in the Pennsylvania State Department of Education, has been active in linking together activities and programs of state agencies previously unconnected. The Education and the Labor Departments and the Bureau of Employment Securities have

made arrangements so that recruitment and counseling for adult learning can be done through local employment offices. Arrangements are underway with the Governor's Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse to foster access for a large group of potential external degree clientele.

Again, these are not the results of formalized evaluation procedures. We are clearly but proudly putting our best foot forward. As individual agencies we have much to learn in terms of systematic self-appraisal procedures, yet the impacts we have seen and experienced to date suggest that we are doing positive and beneficial things. We have received nothing but encouragement to keep at it.

APPENDIX I

DIRECTORY OF BROKERING PROGRAMS 1975

Eastern Programs

- Capital Higher Education Service
  275 Windsor Street
  Hartford, Connecticut 06120
  (213) 527-5261

- Career Counseling Service
  Ocean State Training Center
  Building 808
  Quonset Point, Rhode Island 02819
  (401) 294-2150

- Community College of Vermont
  P. O. Box 81
  Montpelier, Vermont 05602
  (802) 828-2401

- Educational Opportunity Center Program
- Executive Office of Educational Affairs
  18 Tremont Street
  Boston, Massachusetts
  (617) 727-7785

- Hudson Community College Commission
  26 Journal Square
  Jersey City, New Jersey 07306
  (210) 656-2020

- New Jersey Education Consortium
  228 Alexander Street
  Princeton, New Jersey 08540
  (609) 921-2021

- Pennsylvania Adult Counseling Program
  Department of Education
  Box 911
  Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17126
  (717) 787-9602

- Regents External Degree Program
  Voluntary Advisory Network
  99 Washington Avenue
  Albany, New York 12230

- Regional Continuing Education for Women Program
  Temple University
  Broad and Montgomery
  Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19122
  (215) 787-7602

- Regional Learning Service of Central New York
  405 Oak Street
  Syracuse, New York 13203
  (315) 425-5275

- Thomas A. Edison College
  1750 North Olden Avenue
  Trenton, New Jersey 08638
  (609) 292-8092

- Women's Inner City Education Resource Service Center
  90 Warren Street
  Roxbury, Massachusetts 02119
  (617) 440-9150

Southern and Mid-Western Programs

- Center for Open Learning
  Alabama Consortium for the Development of Higher Education
  306 North Main
  Demopolis, Alabama 36736
  (205) 289-0177

- Community-Based Counseling for Adults
  Office of Student Services
  University of Wisconsin-Extension
  Lake Street
  Madison, Wisconsin
  (608) 263-2055

- Greater Cleveland External Degree Service
  Cleveland Public Library
  325 Superior Avenue, N.E.
  Cleveland, Ohio 44114
  (216) 621-5557

- School for New Learning
  DePaul University
  23 East Jackson Boulevard
  Chicago, Illinois 60604
  (312) 939-3525 Ext. 258

Western Programs

- Okanogan County Education Service
  Wenatchee Valley College
  Box 2058
  Omak, Washington 98841
  (509) 826-4901

APPENDIX II

USE OF THIS MONOGRAPH

In the Introduction we said that ". . .we will not follow a tidy litany of Questions and Answers, like the typical 'How To' manual. . . . It is our deep conviction that people who undertake brokering for adult learners should work out their own answers appropriate to their own settings."

We were cautioning you against the tyranny of a handbook. That caution should be raised again. It is natural for those launching new ventures to look elsewhere for models, to see how it has been done before, to anticipate the pitfalls and the successes alike. For the most part, however, we had no such models around when we started our agencies, and there were no handbooks on brokering. We feel that the success of our efforts is due in large part to a simple belief that if we will look hard at the problems ourselves, we can come up with the programs, procedures and structures which will meet them effectively.

It is possible, of course, to benefit from our reports on scouting out new territory. But it is also possible to be unduly constrained by that, and to have your own creative instincts restricted by "what they did in Hartford or Syracuse." Further, it is clear that each setting has its own peculiar institutional financial, political, and educational problems which require quite unique approaches and solutions. What we are hoping, therefore, is that you will insist that the questions which we raise and the problems which we enumerate are authentically the questions and problems relevant to *your* situation.

What we would like to do instead is to lay out some ways of using this monograph that might actually effect the quality of what you are doing or are proposing to do. The following brief descriptions of specific ways to use this monograph are simply suggestions; we hope

they will aid you in probing your own situation in depth, and in creating new agencies suitable to your own setting.

1. Chapter I describes educational brokering in general. Those contemplating the development of a new brokering agency might want to read it by itself. Before proceeding to the other chapters which describe in some detail the issues as experienced in already-developed brokering institutions, the group could ask itself, "if that's what brokering is, and this is what our situation is, what are the issues and problems important to us here?" That is, before being prejudiced by the problems raised in the monograph, the group would start afresh doing a serious job of identifying what, for them, are the issues that ought to be confronted. After such discussion, the other monograph chapters would be brought in as additional input, to add to the list of issues already enumerated by the participants.
2. The nine major clusters of issues identified by chapter headings (e.g., How Do We Staff Our Operations? How Do We Relate To Other Institutions?) can be quickly summarized and reviewed. The participating group of staff or board members would then attempt to negotiate a consensus on which major issues are paramount for them, given their situation and their particular stage of development. The major issues thus identified and ordered form the basis for extended discussion and exploration. The top three or four issues, once enumerated, can be used as the starting place for discussion in four or five continuing group sessions.
3. The questions posed in each of the chapters can serve as a check list for group discussion purposes. The list could be posted on signboards, and the group present would add additional issues from their experience that are not included in the monograph questions. (See the "Inventory of Developmental Issues" following this section.) From the enlarged list, participants would check off those items they already have dealt with, those which are irrelevant to their own situation, and those which need attention. Items that require further discussion would be pursued in smaller groups where the issues would be elaborated and clarified; preliminary solutions could be outlined and reported back to the large group.
4. In some situations there are some very obvious "givens" or constraints which must be attended to before anything else can begin (e.g., one-year funding, limits on staff, facilities). The participating group members would spend an initial period of time listing the major constraints on the development of their program. Before proceeding to the discussion of other issues, it would first be deter-

mined whether or not the constraints were, in fact, set and unalterable. Such matters of space, time, money, staffing and political considerations would be explored in depth so that by the end of an initial session the group could agree upon statements which describe the parameters in which their own program planning and development must take place. Subsequent meetings could then be held in which the group would proceed to discuss developmental issues within the constraints outlined.

5. Chapter IV discusses the area of staffing. We believe that there are some important issues raised about the kinds of people which seem best fitted for the functions and roles involved in educational brokering. The question remains as to where to find them, and how to know them when you see them. Another use of the monograph is suggested by this problem of identifying staff: potential staff people, those who seem like live candidates after initial screening, could be given the monograph to take home and read. A group interview would then be conducted with the five or six candidates in which there would be a discussion of the issues, problems and solutions raised in the monograph. From such a group session, one could not only determine the intellectual capacity of candidates to grasp the many issues involved, but also their ability to make critical judgments about the relative importance of these issues, and their sensitivity to the mission and operations of brokering.

6. There are at least two quite different kinds of groups which might be usefully convened to utilize or base discussions on portions of this monograph. The first is the potential users of an educational brokering service. From the information gained in Chapter III, "Whom Do We Serve?", and the experiences of staff people from the particular region, a cross-section of "most likely clients" would be invited to participate in a workshop session. The goal would be to explore specifically the educational and career needs of potential regional clients. It might happen that they are different from what was expected; some who are invited may have little or no need of such services. It might also happen that others who could benefit from brokering services were *not* identified as potential users. The discussions would serve to sharpen the focus on who might use the service and what specific functions the service would have to provide in order to meet their expressed needs. A secondary point is that such an invitational workshop would be a model for listening and sorting through problems and alternatives appropriate to the actual brokering function itself.

   Another group of people who might usefully be convened are

directors and presidents of educational and social agencies within a region. Institutional leaders are not used to being consulted prior to the development of a possibly competitive institution. The point of convening such a group is not merely to put them at ease relative to replication of services, but to gain benefit from their experiences. Many of them know the history of the area, what has been tried and not tried, and where the gaps are.

The convening of such persons, then, serves two essential purposes; 1) gaining important information on how and what might be done most productively and cooperatively in a given area; 2) building a consultative life style with existing educational and social institutions that helps them to see a new brokering service as an ally in the on-going development of their own organizations.

INVENTORY OF DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

Chapter II: How Do We Select Our Services?

A. What factors will affect our choice of services?

B. What are the limits on the different kinds and range of services we undertake?

C. How can brokering services and instructional services best co-exist?

Chapter III: Whom Do We Serve?

A. Who are our clients?

- What are they like?
- What special characteristics do they have that we must attend to in our outreach and counseling programs?

B. How do we know what they want, what they need from us?

Chapter IV: How Do We Staff Our Operations?

A. What is the nature of roles performed in a brokering agency?

- What kinds of people should be sought to fill these roles?

B. What are the benefits and drawbacks in having central, full-time staff or extended, part-time staff?

- How does this affect our services, procedures, and our impacts?

C. How do we select and train staff?

- When?
- How are staff efforts and energies sustained?

Chapter V: How Do We Organize Our Operations?

A. What is the appropriate style of management in such agencies?

- How are group participation and individual leadership balanced for effective management?
- How are multiple roles and functions coordinated?
- How is decision-making shared?

B. How is internal governance affected by one's membership in larger systems or organizations?

- How does one's niche in the broader scheme of governance and control affect agency autonomy, flexibility?

C. How does structure change over time?

- How does it change as mission and personnel change?
- How does an agency move into its Second Generation phase after the original staff or start-up funds are gone?

Chapter VI: How Do We Relate To Other Institutions?

A. How and at what levels does one initiate links with established academic institutions to serve adult clients?
   - How can credibility be built with them?
   - How does one attract their interest in taking on new, and, to them, atypical students?
   - How can they be shown what brokering does—for them and for learners?

B. How do new brokerage programs find and link into regional/community networks for counseling, education, other human services?
   - How does one get inside to get something going?
   - How are consortium relationships established?

C. How do brokering agencies deal with quality differences in services available?
   - How can one affect the value of others' services to one's own clients?
   - How can one influence others' policies and practices in dealing with adult learners?

D. How does an agency link up with agencies whose purposes are similar to its own to press for policy changes favorable to adult educational programming?
   - Are there others who should be joined with in loose coalitions around specific policy issues or legislation?

Chapter VII: How Do We Reach Our Potential Clients?

A. How do we communicate our presence, our purposes and programs to regional constituencies?
   - How do we let potential adult learners know who we are, what we do and what needs we serve?

B. What are the barriers we will face in trying to reach potential adult learners?
   - What psychological and cultural factors are involved?

Chapter VIII: How Do We Make It Financially?

A. Start-Up Funding
   1. How do we identify potential sources of start-up funds who are sympathetic to adult learners and to the new brokering notion?
   2. How do we keep afloat while doing the conceptual and political spade-work for a major program?
   3. How can we avoid having our purposes and programs skewed, either intentionally or unintentionally, by the sources of money?
   4. How can we cost-estimate our activities in advance and later measure what we have accomplished for every dollar spent?

B. Long-Term Funding

1. What part of our operations can be supported by individual user fees without excluding particular client groups?
2. What employers and institutions/agencies will buy our brokering services for their employees, clients, inmates, patients and other clientele?
3. How might educational institutions, consortia or state systems find it in their interest to support our brokering services?
4. How might our state or local governments establish an annual budgetary line-item for brokering services to adults?
5. Are there federal/state programs that brokering services could implement on annually-renewed grants or contracts?

Chapter IX: How To Appraise Our Efforts?

A. What kinds of outcomes are most important to us?
   - For whom should impacts studies be made?
   - What questions should we be asking ourselves?

B. How do we go about evaluating our impacts?
   - What are the criteria, the indicators relevant to brokering activities?
   - How do we collect data and proceed with evaluation in ways harmonious with our values, our staffs and our focus on clients?

C. Just what effects have we had, specifically, on individuals and on institutions?
   - Have we, in fact, changed anything?
   - What are the results of our first attempts at self-appraisal?

The National Center for Educational Brokering was established in January, 1976, to help promote the concept and practices of educational brokering. The Center publishes a monthly *Bulletin*, provides technical assistance to new and existing brokerages, and furnishes information to policy-makers, state and federal, about advisement, assessment and advocacy services for adult learners.